

REFLEXIONS UPON RIDICULE;

O R,

What it is that makes a Man ridiculous;
and the Means to avoid it.

Wherein are Represented

The different MANNERS and
CHARACTERS of Persons of
the present Age.

In Two Volumes.

V O L. I.

Of {	Unpoliteness.	Of {	Prejudice.
	Indiscretion.		Interest.
	Affectation.		Sufficiency.
	Foolish Vanity.		Absurdities.
	The bad Taste.		Caprice.
	Imposture.		False Delicacy.
	The Morose Humour.		Decorum.
	Impertinence.		

The FIFTH EDITION.

L O N D O N :

Printed for D. MIDWINTER, W. INNYS and
R. MANBY, in *St. Paul's Church-yard*;
A. WARD in *Little-Britain*; T. LONGMAN
in *Pater-noster-Row*; and C. BATHURST in
Fleetstreet. MDCCXXXIX.

REFLECTIONS UPON RIDICULE



To H. K. Esquire.

S I R,



THE Nature of this little Present, obliges me to deviate from the common Road of Dedications, and therefore you must not expect I should strew my Way to you with Incense, or attempt to make your Panegyrick. You'll find the Design of it is to prevent or remedy Prejudice, Affectation and Vanity, to prune the Excrescences of Self-Love, and by exposing all the antick Shapes and apish Postures of RIDICULE, shew you what it is to deport yourself like a Man in the Commerce of the World; and under this View, you must permit me to talk to you with a Freedom and Familiarity, somewhat like that of your Tutor; to call your Thoughts and Reflections home, and open your Eyes to a Prospect, which young People seldom care to dwell upon, that is, Themselves. I must confess, the Advantages of your Education seem to supersede this Labour, and to render it either superfluous or pre-

DEDICATION.

sumptuous: For you are now breathing the pure and salutary Airs of *Parnassus*, and drinking at the Streams of *Helicon*: You are admitted to the Court, where Learning and the Muses keep their Residence, and good Manners are taught and practis'd in all their Branches and Extent. You abound in Precepts and Examples, and whatever may contribute to form your Head, and adorn your Mind, and make you Wise and Good: But then, Sir, I must remind you, that with all these happy Circumstances, there is one Thing little consider'd or apprehended, naturally apt to prove a Temptation and a Snare to you, which you can't be too carefully caution'd and arm'd against; I mean, your too unfortunate and too early Succession to the Estate of your Ancestors. That Greenness of Age which entitles to inherit, seldom qualifies to live; and 'tis a real Hardship upon a young Gentleman to be trusted into the Hands of his own Power, before he arrives to the Years which give Maturity to his Reason and his Judgment. How ungovernable are the Passions and Sallies of Youth, when licens'd and indulg'd? What Swarms of Caprices and Fancies infest this Season of Life, which
would

DEDICATION.

would wither and perish in the Embrio, unless enliven'd with Wealth, which hatches and sedges the Chimera's? Those Projects of Pleasure and Vice, of Folly and Love, the usual Objects and Entertainments of juvenile Minds, start out and flourish in the Sunshine of a plentiful Fortune, and make the Person odious and ridiculous, whom an obscurer State might have shelter'd with the Reputation of Sobriety and Discretion. Your greatest Security in this particular, is your native Modesty, and genuine Dispositions to Virtue, improved and cultivated by the Care and Conduct of an Academical Education; from whence, Sir, you may learn to put a due Value upon those happy Minutes you employ in it; the best Opportunity to store your Soul with sound Sense, and honourable Principles, which will improve with Years, and exert themselves in all the Parts of Life. Here, Sir, you will be furnish'd with a Method, how to spend your Time, the greatest Incumbrance upon the Hands of untutor'd Gentlemen, without Recourse to such Arts and Amusements, as debase a Man beneath himself, and make him the most contemptible Thing in the World. For

DEDICATION.

pray, Sir, ask yourself this Question, Whether are the more rational Animals of the two, the Dogs, whose Nature and Business it is to follow the Game, or their Masters, who make it their only Business to follow the Dogs? Consider; which is the more important Employment, that of a Child playing with Toys and Feathers, or that of a Man continually dealing in Cards and Dice? He that has not learnt to employ his Hours to better Purpose, is a Thing that seems sent into the World like Insects, only to bask in the Gleams of the warm Day, and be impertinent and good for nothing; and yet, I need not tell you, there are Numbers, who by a still more criminal and scandalous Conduct; sink into Beast and Prodigy. Your propitious Stars have provided better for you, and supply'd you with all the Means and Opportunities to raise your Merit, and qualify you for important Services to your Country. 'Tis in your Power to chuse whether you'll bury your Talent, and let it rust in Obscurity and Silence, or whether you'll be at the Pains to polish and brighten up your Parts, and make yourself Eminent and Conspicuous in the World. You have considerable Ex-
amples

DEDICATION.

amples before your Eyes; and, could you inherit the Virtues, as you do the Estate of your Family, you would need nothing more to your Accomplishment. Your Grandfather's Learning and Politeness, your Father's Generosity and good Nature, your Mother's Piety and Goodness, are all perfect Originals in their Kind; and upon these Models, as the Painter drew his *Venus* from the united Beauties of the Age, you may build and finish the Gentleman. But what a Task will you think impos'd upon you, when you shall find that Learning, and Merit, and Wit, and Beauty, the chief Endowments of Mind and Body, may be of little Service to the Possessor, unless he be instructed in the Art of Living, and the Art of Pleasing? There are certain curious and fine Touches of the Pencil, which add Life and Charms to the Piece; some additional Graces to the Musick, which render the Consort so ravishing and killing; and there are some Dresses and Deportments, some Mien and Airs of Virtue which make it so powerful and penetrating. The Difficulty consists in drawing out the glittering Store, and employing it

DEDICATION.

on pertinent Occasions; in spreading a Man's Merit, without Vanity and Affectation, and in shining in such a Manner, as not to dazzle and confound, and raise the Envy and Indignation of Beholders. Happy he that has found the noble Secret at once, to deserve and please! Nature, and Art, and Fortune, and Favour; and a potent Constellation, must all combine to furnish out a Merit thus acceptable to Mankind. It will require great Commerce, and long Practice to perfect him in this Science: He must study Men and Books, the World and Himself, and be able to rise or stoop to all the different Abilities, and comport with the various Tempers and Humours of Men. He must, especially, penetrate into that *Je ne sçai quoi*, which makes some so well receiv'd, and others of equal Merit so disgustful, which in the one provokes and encourages, and in the others prevents and forbids RIDICULE. In this, Sir, I must profess myself as unable to direct you in the Theory, as I am to observe the Practice; it may be of no little Use to you to read this little Tract of a Person who has travell'd the Country before you, and furnish'd you with Memoirs and Observations; which your own Judgment,

D E D I C A T I O N.

ment, as you pass, will verify and corroborate, and fix deeper in your Memory: When you find your own Sentiments painted to the Life, and the Manners of your Acquaintance delicately touch'd, and as clearly describ'd as acted, you'll be struck with an agreeable Surprise, and cry out with the *Trojan*,

Quæ regio in terris nostri non plena laboris?

You'll wonder to see your own secret Thoughts, Desires and Passions, thus meet you in a Glass, and be apt to enquire who it is has stol'n your Picture? And by the Collation and Comparison of Characters, Things and Persons, you'll extract what is odious and offensive, what is charming and delicious in Conversation, and what makes or spoils the Well-bred Man? You'll find here a delicate kind of *Etbicks*, not taught by the Masters of that Science: Some *intellectual* Immoralities, flowing rather from the Head than Heart, which, tho' the Will has little to do in them, have as ill Consequences in Life, as those of a more malignant Nature. A single Word mis-plac'd or mis-tim'd, a Look, a Gesture, or a Smile, *mal à propos*, may have troublesome

DEDICATION.

blesome Effects. But, not to anticipate you in your Discoveries, I will only venture to lay in one Precaution against a *foiblesse* your Situation is most likely to expose you to, which is, Fondness of Praise and Commendation. The Heart has no Avenue so open, as that to Flattery, which like some Enchantment, lays all its Guards asleep; and, if this should be your weak Side, you'll find it expos'd to continual Batteries, which there would be no withstanding. Some would humour your Vanity out of Interest, and others out of Raillery and Sport; and the Event would be, the Neglect to acquire these good Qualities that poison'd Incense endows you with, and a wonderful Fund of RIDICULE. To prevent this, whenever you are sed with the Notions of your Quality and Fortune, your Ancient House and fine Estate, your Dependants and Tenants, reflect what a Figure it becomes you to make to be equal to these Advantages. Think how many Ingredients enter the Constitution of a Gentleman, and how the Mixture of one Vice or Folly, depraves and corrupts the whole Composition. Consider what you owe to the Expectations of your Friends and Country,

DEDICATION.

try, and how you ought to answer them. With the due Influence of these Thoughts, you will resolutely pursue the Progress you have so well begun, and lay an early Foundation of good Learning and good Breeding, Virtue and Honour, which you'll have Leisure hereafter to superstruct and adorn in all the Offices of Life. Now, Sir, if you'll pardon this Freedom, I shall be the less concern'd for what will be said by others, of trifling away Time in the Translation. Every Man has his Diversions, and as there is something of Commendation in that sort of Play which designs the Stakes for the Advantage of the Poor, there can be no great Discredit in spending a few vacant Hours in Charity to the Rich: The Ladies, as well as Gentlemen, will find something here they may improve by; there being nothing more wanting in the World, than a Practice suitable to these Reflexions, which would file off the Unevenness of Tempers, and make Conversation much easier, and more satisfactory than it is commonly found to be. I am,

S I R,

Your Faithful

Humble Servant.



CONTENTS.

R Reflections upon Ridicule, and the Means to avoid it, <i>Page</i> 1	
<i>Of</i> Unpoliteness, ————	6
Indiscretion, ————	31
Affectation, ————	58
Foolish Vanity, ————	74
<i>The</i> bad Taste, ————	94
Imposture, ————	107
<i>The</i> morose Humour, ————	128
Impertinence, ————	145
Prejudice, ————	166
Interest, ————	189
Sufficiency, ————	213
Absurdities, ————	227
Caprice, ————	244
False Delicacy, ————	259
Decorum, ————	270

Adver-



Advertisement.



*I S not an extravagant and gross Ridicule that is the Business of these Reflexions, but that nice one the most polite People sometimes fall into without perceiving it. It often happens, that those very Things they pride themselves in, and affect to distinguish themselves by, expose them to Contempt and Raillery, because they can't conceal a foolish Vanity in their Ways, or an unreasonable Desire of pleasing and out-doing all the World. Hence proceeds that Reluctance to yield, and go into the Reasons of others, whilst an importunate Obstinacy to defend their own Opinions runs them into many Extravagancies and Follies. Most of the Things so hotly disputed, are Trifles of no Consequence, and yet People make it a Point of Honour to gain a chimerical Victory: An Excess of Sincerity is equally ridiculous with
this*

Advertisement.

this *Obstinacy and Conceitedness*, as when we find People of such a Character, as will be always saying something disgusting to the Persons they converse with. *What Reason* have they to turn Counsellors, before their Advice is ask'd? We don't love those that tell us of our Faults; our Desire is to be flatter'd and applauded: 'Tis, especially, an *Impertinence* to blame in others those Faults which we are liable to be censur'd for ourselves, and which are more manifest and gross in us than in those we pretend to reprehend.

We feel an uneasy *Resentment* against those that interrupt us in relating an Adventure, or telling a Story, and think them rude and ill-bred People; and yet, if we take not heed, we continually fall into the same Error.

In like manner, we suffer by the *Indiscretion* of those that listen to our secret Discourse, the Attention they manifest to steal our Secrets from us, provokes us against them: We shall see by the Enumeration of the Faults of Mankind how carefully we ought to watch ourselves, to avoid being ridiculous.

We chose rather to treat this Subject by loose and disjointed Thoughts, than by long Chapters and compleat Traëts, which would have been, perhaps, more tedious, and less useful: The eager and impetuous Genius of the Reader loves Novelty and diversified Matter, but tires under long Discourses upon the same Subjects. The Hope of seeing new Countries, and making new Discoveries, is a Spur to the Curiosity.

Advertisement.

These Reflexions were made at different Seasons, and on different Occasions, by examining the ill Carriage, the ridiculous Ways and Whimfies of Men, and the Reasons why certain Persons of sufficient Merit have not the Faculty of pleasing.

We offer not this to the Publick as a Thing of extreme Consequence, we can only say there is not a Page but a Man may profit by; the Picture of the Vices here criticiz'd will serve for a Rule to amend them: A Man that feels himself smitten in his weak Part, and sees himself painted to the Life, immediately conceives a secret Spleen against the Author, in this resembling a deform'd Woman when you shew her the Glass.

I am apt to think, that they who speak in publick will find in these Reflexions, as simple as they appear, something wherewithal to embellish their Discourses, which, for the generality, are empty of Thought; they go not to the Bottom of Men's Manners; they are not sufficiently acquainted with the Doubles and Foldings of an human Heart, and the ill Effects of the Passions: They speak only indefinite and general Things, which no body is concern'd in, and which awakens not the Auditor's Attention; you must paint him, if you'll awaken him.

The Names employ'd in this Treatise are fictitious; the Vices therein expos'd are the Infirmities of Man's Nature, which are dispers'd amongst Mankind in general, but meet in no one Man in particular.

You'll find here, perhaps, some Maxims and Touches that seem to coincide, and which the
unin-

Advertisement.

unintelligent will confound with one another; the Reason is, that in the Vices and Passions there are nice Differences that are only distinguish'd by good Judges: To shew them, as they ought, you must put them in different Lights, and under such Circumstances as discover the Degree, and brighten up the Folly. Tempers, Humours, and Conjectures, give new Postures to Vices, if I may use that Expression: The Make of the Mind, and Motions of the Heart, Affections and Interests, change the Nature of the Passions, which are different in all Men, which made me think that these seeming Repetitions were necessary to the Execution of my Design.





REFLECTIONS
UPON
RIDICULE,
AND THE
MEANS to avoid it.



Man may fall into Ridicule, tho' endow'd with Parts, and personal Merit, and fine Qualities, and singular Talents, if he knows not how to put them in Practice. On the contrary, Men of a moderate Desert make themselves courted, and by their Charms and Politeness, eclipse the brightest Wits; because they have, I know not what Bluntness and Rusticity, and ridiculous Ways with them.

B

Men

Men are made for Society, and therefore the most useful of all Sciences is the Art of Living, which guards us perpetually against *Ridicule*, and teaches us to avoid whatever may disgust the Persons we converse with, and diminish the Pleasure they take in our Conversation.

Good Qualities sometimes contribute to make a Man ridiculous, when he makes not a good Use of them; if he has Wit and Spirit, he'll think to shine in Conversation, and carry every thing his own way; he'll exercise a despotical Empire over Opinions; his Wit will sometimes carry him to extravagant Singularities and dangerous Indiscretions, which will make him fear'd where-ever he comes, because he's Magisterial on all Occasions.

Let a Man have never so much Merit, 'tis not best to shew himself too much. There are few People but lessen others Esteem of them, by a long Acquaintance, because they will always be under the constraint of concealing their Faults.

The Ambition to please those we at first are acquainted with, keeps us upon our Guard, and makes us put our best Side outermost, but proportionably as this Desire abates, the Care of concealing our Imperfections wear off. 'Tis almost the same as with an Husband and a Wife; in the early Days of their Marriage, they take Care to appear to each other with all their Advantages, but at last they are weary of this Constraint, which is the first Step towards that Indifference they have for one another all the rest of their Lives.

'Tis

'Tis pretty difficult to conceive why some People, in whom we find uncommon Qualities, don't please, and why we remain unaffected with the Beauty of certain Women: Their extravagant, indiscreet, ill-bred, starcht or giddy Carriage, destroys the Impressions their Beauty had made: Their moral and intellectual Imperfections prevent their external Charms from having their Effect.

'Tis a Folly to wink against our own Imperfections, and to seek pitiful Arguments to evade the Thoughts of them; for tho' it may be easy to put a Fallacy upon ourselves, there's no imposing upon the Publick, a penetrating and inexorable Judge. Did we take the same Pains to get rid of our Passions, as to disguise them, we should find a Cure of them; now 'tis hard to determine which is best, an excessive Care to conceal ourselves, or that supineness of those who are always exposing their weak Part, and giving themselves entirely up to a lazy Indifference, amongst whom the trouble of conquering a ruling Passion, or at least of dissembling it, often carries it above the love of Fame or Fortune, notwithstanding the prevalence of these Desires.

'Tis certain that every Body has their Faults, this is a Misery inseparable from human Nature, but others ought not to suffer by them. The chief Study of a worthy Man, ought to be how to be deliver'd from his Vices, at least how to conceal them; that which goes by the Name of great Merit, is sometimes nothing but a great Artifice to hide our Imperfections.

How many are there in the World that go for Men of a sublime Genius, because no Body has sounded the Depth of them? How many are there that have the Reputation of modest and strict Women, because they have the Art to conceal their Intrigues, and no body takes the Pains to track them? *Ilaria* died with the Reputation of a Vestal, had she carried her Cabinet into the other World she had been regarded as a Pattern of Sobriety. She always took care to conceal her little Correspondences with extraordinary Conduct, but the Love-Letters she forgot to burn, have unhappily open'd Mysteries which nobody was let into before.

Publick Esteem is commonly more owing to Fate or Fortune than true Merit, and a great Reputation requires both Address and good Luck, for the obtaining and preserving it. Man is made up of good and bad Qualities, and these are the Plans he is to work upon to fit himself for the Palate of the World, in doing which he must husband his Talents, and so time and qualify their Exercise as to disgust no body by them. That which surprizes at first, soon after makes less Impression, and at last grows distasteful. We sometimes lose the Esteem of Men, whilst the good Qualities that deserv'd it continue in their full Force. A too frequent Commerce with the same Persons, degrades a Man of a certain Air of Dignity, which Retirement and Gravity give to such as shew themselves more rarely.

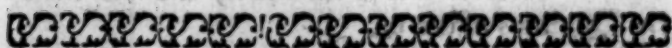
We

Reflections upon Ridicule. 5

We are taken with their first Address, but the more we converse with them, the less their rare Qualities affect us.

The desire of Pleasing is natural; all Men endeavour to make themselves acceptable to the Persons they see often, and to merit their Esteem; even those of the meanest and most sordid Occupations would have the Glory of Pre-eminence in them: But tho' all so studiously affect to give themselves a Politeness and Distinction, very few arrive to it, because they are ignorant of the Road they ought to take: The surest and the shortest would be that of observing, in Men of Merit, what it is distinguishes them from the Vulgar; and in others that are not taking, what it is in them that is disgustful. The School of the World, if we knew what use to make of it, is best capable of all things to form the Mind, and give it that Tincture of Politeness, which is not obtain'd but by seeing polite Persons, and by copying after their Pattern.

There are few that study to know their own Failings, because 'tis a Science that disturbs and wounds their Vanity. They commonly flatter themselves with the possession of those good Qualities, which they are so far from having, that they have the very reverse of them; they are infinitely out in their Accounts; whilst they entirely affect they are good natur'd, complaisant and easy, they are commonly blunt, rough and disrespectful.



Concerning Unpoliteness.

UNpoliteness is not a single Fault, but a Constellation of many Vices. 'Tis sometimes a gross Ignorance of Decorum, or a stupid Unconcernedness; that robs others of the Respects we owe them. 'Tis Moroseness and ill Nature, which settle a Man in a constant Disposition to oppose himself to whatever may please another; 'tis the Product of a foolish Vanity which throws off all Regards for every Body of a haughty and fantastical Humour, that exalts itself above the Rules of Civil Life; or of a dark Spirit of Moroseness, that makes its chief Diversion to rebuff People and disoblige them.

Unpoliteness is perhaps, of all Vices, that which makes a Man most despicable, and intangles him in most Inconveniences; we pardon him in his Infirmities, we even excuse Bluntnesses and Extravagances that escape him; but Unpoliteness is a kind of Habit which a Man continually suffers by; it strikes to the Quick when it flows mingled with cold Blood, because it then expresses Scorn and Contempt; and 'tis what a Man never forgives, as having always so good an Opinion of himself, as to believe he deserves fair Quarter.

The

Concerning Unpoliteness.

7

The unbecoming Rudeness which Persons of a distinguish'd Quality sometimes allow themselves, create a general Aversion, and bespeak a bad Education; that which makes young Gentlemen give themselves these Liberties, is the Easiness they find to furnish out such kind of Conversation; that Easiness makes them lazy, but it disgusts nice People, and even spoils their own Taste, inuring them to such base Familiarities as wound the Respect which Persons of Quality owe to one another and themselves.

Is it to shew his Parts, and make himself acceptable, that *Fadius* speaks with so much Liberty of his own Faults and the Faults of others, that he throws about their Gloves and Hats, that going to speak to any body, he salutes him with a Knock of his Elbow, to quicken him, or as a Signal that he has something to say to him? 'Tis true, *Fadius*, you are of a great Family, and your Name is famous in History: But can the Virtues of your Ancestors exempt you from Civility and good Breeding? Do they give you a Privilege of being a Bully, of brutally affronting and disobliging People, and having no Respect for all the World?

'Tis no wonder that young People are so Clownish and Unpolite; Politeness being a Combination of Discretion, Civility, Complaisance, Circumspection, and Modesty, accompanied with an agreeable Air, which expands itself upon whatever you say or do. Now they are neither Discreet, nor Civil, nor Complaisant, but have all the opposite Vices,

8 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

and have no Thoughts of getting free from them; their Words and Actions have a kind of Harshness and Wildness in them, they have a sort of warlike Air, and you would think they were always going to mount the Breach.

It requires a Guard and Attention over one's self to avoid the Faults of Unpoliteness, which is the Reason that young People, who follow only their own Humours and Caprices, and live without Reflections, are Brutish and Unpolite; that they have no Complaisance for the Women, that they make it a sort of Merit to affront them, to vilify them, to draw them in horrid Colours against Reason and Truth; so far are they from respecting them as they ought, that they make it a piece of Honour to insult them, and boast of it as a noble Exploit. What Manners! What Brutality is this!

'Tis a very insipid Character, that of some People, who make it a constant Practice to say soft things to all Women. Indeed we are obliged to be Civil and Genteel on their Regard; but such of them as have any Judgment, have nothing but Contempt for those silly Adorers, who consume their Incense indifferently on every handsome Face. The young People of this Age, are sufficiently recover'd of that ridiculous Vanity; their Manners have more of the Field than the Court in them, and they are more in danger of Unpoliteness and Incivility, than of an Excess of Complaisance, and an over-strained Courtliness for the Women.

We

We are to do that Honour to those that speak, to hear them out and give a pertinent Answer. Abundance of People, too visibly, shew the Distraction and Disquiet they are under; you discover in their Looks the Impatience they have to leave you, and how much they are tir'd with your Discourse; instead of being attentive to what you say to them, they are only spying out a Moment to desert you, without giving you time to finish what you had begun to tell them. You would judge by the haste that *Theobald* is in, that he has always the most important Affairs upon his Hands; every Moment you steal from him is precious; he vouchsafes not to answer you but in a negligent manner, and has so little Consideration for you, as to let you see your Company is troublesome, and that he looks upon you as an Impertinent.

The Country-Squires, and People that want Sense, listen in Conversation with a silly Attention, and hazard not to speak; we are often oblig'd to them for their Silence, which is more acceptable than their Discourse of their Farmers and their Dogs, their Horses and their Game, the Hares they have hunted, and the number of Partridges they have kill'd in an Autumn, with so many Particulars of them as almost to tell you their Names. This Reflection regards only those who were never out of their native Soil, and have had no Commerce with the World.

How is't possible for Men of Sense, and who have any Tincture of good Breeding, not to be

sick of the generality of Conversation? You find in it nothing but insipid Jesters, the Retailers of Fooleries, Dealers in Scandal, who unmercifully tear the Reputation of all Mankind; barren Wits which contribute nothing to Society; superficial Brains, or turn'd to trifling, unable to sustain a polite Conversation founded on serious Affairs; Persons prepossessed with their own Merit, who approve of nothing but what has reference to themselves. But of all, those are the most troublesome who will be always contradicting, and who immediately declare themselves against what others advance; they are not always sure of their own Notions, and they contradict merely for the sake of an ill-natur'd Pleasure of being of a contrary Opinion.

Take heed how you discover your Opinion before *Mursaut* has spoke his, and when he's once fixt, be sure you don't oppose him, unless you are willing to make a Personal Quarrel. He was never of the same Mind with any other Man, always resolv'd to take the Negative of what others affirm; he defends the most indifferent Things with the same Heat as if the Fate of the Kingdom was concern'd; not that he is at all affected, but only for the sake of Contradiction. They that know his blind-side and would be diverted, give him time to throw out all his Fire; presently after they propose the same Subject, as if they were of his Opinion; but whether he has forgot himself, or meerly out of Caprice, he takes the quite contrary

trary Side to what he just before vehemently defended. This is perfect Comedy.

This is no good way to make one's Company desirable, and to gain the Esteem and Affection of Men. Most of those that are fond of themselves, and Idolaters of their own Notions, would have you defer to all they say, and are out of their Senses, if you are not touch'd with it, or are so plain with them as to let them know, that what they say are Impertinences, not meriting to be heard. For my part, I confess, I tremble as often as I am oblig'd to speak, or to expose my Opinion, or to relate a Story before *Lycander*; he bluntly tells me, *That is False*, without staying till I explain my Reasons; he insinuates, that my Opinion is Ridiculous; that what I tell is News to no body, and that he knew it long ago: I press him to give some Circumstances, but he knows not so much as what I was going to speak of. *Lycander* and his Fellows ought to have more Respect for others, and less Presumption of his own Sufficiency, lest they incur the Imputation of proud, contemptuous, haughty and ill-bred Persons.

'Tis an unpardonable Incivility to interrupt a Person that tells a Story; 'tis much better to let him fail in some Circumstance of the History, than to rectify him, if he asks not our Advice; or to signify we knew long before the News he would acquaint us with. To what purpose is it to refuse a Man the Pleasure of believing he inform'd us of something we were ignorant of?

'Tis

12 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

'Tis not hard to comprehend why the Discourse of young People is so disgustful and insipid; the Charms that Youth affords them can't bear them out against the Roughness and Unpoliteness of their Behaviour; for that agreeable Exterior produces not at length so much Pleasure, as their Unpoliteness creates Dislike.

Familiarity with Women of Merit and Beauty is dangerous, but notwithstanding, we ought not to be wanting in the Civility that is due to them; by this we compensate in some manner for that Dependence to which the Laws have submitted them, and therefore they have a lively Sense of the Injury we do them, by the Deficiency of our Respect, and they revenge themselves whenever they find Occasion.

Women behold themselves in their Glasses with different Eyes from what others regard them with; their Imagination presents a thousand Charms, which they really have not. 'Tis too ticklish an Affair to go about to undeceive them. Why would you rob *Clariana* of the Pleasure of believing herself amiable and pretty? You'll never persuade her to the contrary with all your Rhetorick, but you infallibly gain her Hatred.

I have heard *Nicomedes* say of a Woman, loud enough to be heard by her, that she was ugly. The same Person talk'd of *Belinda's* Gallantries before her; he cited the Names of her Sparks, and reckon'd up the Assignations she had made them, as if he had been in the Secret,

Secret, or had had it by Conjurat[i]on. Is it possible People of Quality should be so brutally stupid?

'Tis difficult to yield, when a Man thinks he has Reason on his side, and yet 'tis better to do it, than to discover an importunate Obstinacy to maintain one's own Opinions. Most of the Things disputed are frivolous, and of no Consequence; Why then should it be made a Point of Honour to obtain a Victory, and bring all the World over to our Opinions? Let us indulge them the Pleasure of believing they think justly, and have Reason.

'Tis a Defect of Civility and good Breeding to hear what is not said to us. Those Persons who are so attentive to desire what is industriously conceal'd from them, are very troublesome in Conversation, and they incur the Hatred of those whose Secrets they divulge, when they have stol'n them in that Manner.

But 'tis much worse when they think they conjecture what others secretly discourse of, and vent their Imaginations, as if they were intrusted with the Matter. I have it from good Hands, says *Balsamon*, that such a one is one of *Belisa's* particular Favourites, and that she's blindly fond of him. If I should tell you, adds he, in a loud and positive Tone, all I know of this Particular, you would say I had good Intelligence of all her Marches. The Truth is, *Balsamon* never saw *Belisa*, and knows not one of her Correspondents.

We

14 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

We daily meet with People of this Character, who come and tell you Lies in a mysterious way, as if they told you mighty News; they fail not to confirm their Imposture with the Name of some considerable Man, to give Weight to their Report. This Person is immediately quoted every where, as if he was actually the Author of the News, which is nothing but Chimera.

Men are naturally ambitious of distinguishing themselves, and eclipsing the rest of the Company, which is the Reason why they commonly depart from it but ill satisfy'd: Every one thinks on himself, and how to make the greatest Shew of his own Parts. They kindle against such as will be Topping and Monopolizing the Conversation, this being a sort of Tyranny they would exercise over Wit, for which they are equally hated as those that would lord it alone in a Commonwealth. The way is to accommodate ourselves to the Abilities of the Persons we frequent, and dexterously to lead the Discourse to Subjects proportion'd to them. 'Tis a sure Method of Pleasing to attend to others with Pleasure, and without Jealousy, and give them Opportunities to shew their Parts.

'Tis a sign of a sublime Genius, not to care to be thought a great Wit, to talk of Trifles with mean People, though he has a thousand fine Things to say upon all sorts of Subjects; so to proportion himself to the Humour and Character of those he converses with, as to let them think themselves upon a Level with him; they

they are charm'd with you and themselves when they think they see this Equality, which infinitely flatters their Self-love. It requires a great deal of Sense to be able to make these Condescensions, and a great Stock of Modesty, not to desire to outshine others when we can, and make a show of our best Talents.

When *Baldus* comes to pay you a Visit, he begins his Discourse in the Anti-Chamber, he talks aloud, and in a continued Nonsense, not caring whether he be heard; all his Design is to talk: A Man must be very nimble, to seize the Moment in which he coughs or blows his Nose, to enter into the Discourse, and to be able to crowd in some Words by Stealth; I have seen People compound with him, and demand of him at first, how long he'll fatigue the Company; he declares, and they take their Watches and make him stand to his Articles.

We can't avoid being angry with those that break their Word, but 'tis more genteel and generous to dissemble our Resentment, than to make a Noise of it. That which first offers itself is the Desire to quarrel with them, and hence we charge them with the Fault they have committed, in heinous and offensive Terms: Would it not be better softly to insinuate, that they fail'd in their Duty, and that we are touch'd with their Proceeding? Too imperious Reproaches, instead of contributing to reduce People to their Duty, frequently exasperate them against you, because a Man will always be in the right, or at least, will not be found

16 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

found in a Fault. Our Self-Love is wretchedly put to it, when we are to justify ourselves in a Point which our Conscience condemns us for; but he must be extremely rude and cruel, who insults a Man that has been guilty of a Folly, and expresses a malicious Joy at his Confusion. 'Tis like giving a Man a Blow with a Pole that is drowning.

There are, however, some Occasions, wherein 'tis fit to insinuate to a Man who has been out of the way, and committed a Fault of Consequence, that he ought to be somewhat more cautious of his Conduct. This Part demands great Precaution, to avoid offending against the Characters of Civility and good Manners. A Man should study the Taste of others, to be able to insinuate into them; that the Advice he gives them, may have its effect without disgusting them.

Without a good Fund of Sense, the change of Fortune begets a Change in Manners, and Alteration in Opinions. They who had no Ambition in a moderate Fortune, grow sometimes insolent upon their Exaltation, which serves only to expose their Extravagancies, and make them despicable to those who have no Expectations from their Credit. *Clito* had but a little Estate, and then was good-natur'd, polite, complemental and careffing; but since he has inherited an Estate, he is become haughty, proud, disdainful; he despises his old Friends, he does not know them, he does not see them, he has forgotten their Names and his own too. 'Tis no longer the same Man, but they are two *Clito's*,
On

On the contrary. Those that are morose, crabbed and intractable in Ill-fortune, grow good-humour'd, easy and affable in a more happy State.

We do not always oblige People by doing them good Offices, unless they be genteely manag'd. *Cleantes* has serv'd me in an Affair wherein I had need of his Interest, I was oblig'd to him for the Zeal he manifested in my Cause; but ever since he talks eternally of what he has done for me, and without any Intention to reproach me, he continually deduces the Conversation to this Topick: *Do you remember what I did for you on such an Occasion? I drew you out of a ticklish Affair.* 'Tis losing the Price of a Benefit to talk of it, and to applaud a Man's self for the Advances he has made for his Friends. However, he that has receiv'd the Friendship ought never to forget it, nor to blush when he sees his Benefactor.

A secret Pride, which is natural to all Men, of what Quality soever, makes it a difficult thing to beg. 'Tis a very great Punishment to a generous Soul to see itself reduc'd to the imploring another's Assistance. We should soften therefore, as much as possible, this Uneasiness, and take care not to increase it by a miss and discouraging way. 'Tis a piece of extream Ill-breeding to discover, in a rugged Countenance, the Regret we have to do a Kindness.

'Tis ridiculous for Men to trick up and dress themselves like Women; 'tis a Fault too to be slovenly and nasty. A too negligent
Exte-

18 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

Exterior gives ill Impressions of the Person, and makes him lose a part of his Merit. A Man that has a good Air and a good Grace, prepares us for a more favourable Reception of what he desires to insinuate; a good Mien and an handsome Outside are Prejudices in favour of the Speaker; and we hear not with equal Pleasure a Man negligent and disorder'd in his Habit.

To be in a Passion at every turn, and always at Dagger's-drawing, is the sign of a little Genius, of Unpoliteness, or a sordid Education. Noble and sublime Souls can't be mov'd out of their Temper for Trifles. The Polite easily excuse the Weaknesses or Rusticities of others, and seem not to perceive the little Incongruities that might provoke them, or to hear the disobliging Words that are said to them.

'Tis impossible to live long in the World, without having reason to complain of the Incivility of Men; but they that will pass by nothing, and are too exceptionous, are commonly more uncivil than those they complain of.

If any one Brow-beats you, or talks to you in a proud and haughty Strain, answer him not in the like. The best way to *nonplus* such Persons is to speak to them without Commotion; that Moderation is the Character of a Soul that commands itself; and besides, this opposite Conduct best exposes the Folly and Extravagance of those that offend you. Give others leave to say all the Fooleries they please, but don't you imitate them.

The

The Misfortune is, no body will yield; a Man would think he injur'd and disgrac'd himself, if he should hear in a sedate and unconcern'd manner, the Rudenesses that are said to him, which makes him answer smartly and provokingly; these Repartees, full of Heat and Passion, are a very disagreeable Musick for the Company, who have nothing to do with the Quarrel: People should, at least, have the Discretion to quarrel apart, and not call all the Street to be witness of their Extravagancies.

Not that I pretend we ought to have an insipid Complaisance for all that others say, and fulsomely applaud them. Diversity of Opinions is sometimes necessary to quicken Conversation, but we ought to be cautious that the Dispute be not inflam'd; as when *Euthymus* propounds his Sentiments as Decisions, to which you must absolutely submit, or quarrel with him.

An excess of Sincerity is sometimes as dangerous, as a too effeminate and studied Complaisance. You become the Terror of all Companies, by the Liberty you take to tell all People, to their Face, your Thoughts of them: Why do you take upon you to give your Advice where it is not ask'd? 'Tis a certain Means to make you hated, because no body loves to be corrected, but to be flatter'd and applauded.

I know a Man that never accosts others, but to tell them some ungrateful News. If they have spoken in Publick, he tells them to their Face, that their Discourse was not well received;

20 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

ceiv'd; he insinuates, that their Conduct is complain'd of, and that something is discover'd to their Disgrace: *O take heed of that!* (says he in a milder way) *the World exclaims and censures your Actions.* 'Tis not a friendly Zeal that guides him and makes him talk thus, but pure Jealousy, and a malicious Pleasure he takes to vex you.

But 'tis the very height of Incivility to talk to People of their natural Imperfections. Why should you tell a Woman that she is ill made? one, that she is too fat? another, that she is too lean, and all of a size? and a third, that she paints, and buys her Beauty of the Druggist? These Reproaches vex them more than if you accus'd them of having poison'd any body. In like manner, we should be cautious of making People sensible of their Weakness in Point of Parts. There's not so mean a Preacher, but flatters himself that he charms his Auditors; nor any Advocate so decried at the Bar, but seeks, in the Eyes of the Hearers, the Applauses which all the World denies him. Indulge them in so sweet an Error that does nobody any harm, but makes their Life flow more pleasantly on.

'Tis commonly an Incivility to speak low in Conversation; such as are excluded from these Mysteries have reason to suspect you talk of them, or else despise them. *Lycas* constantly comes up to *Gleander* where-ever he finds him, and continually whispers him in the Ear; to cultivate *Gleander*, from whom he expects good Offices, he runs the risque of affronting all the Company.

No

Concerning Unpoliteness. 21

No body is oblig'd to make Feasts and Entertainments, because there is no Law that appoints them, but when we do it, it ought to be with good Grace. Suffer not to appear in a restless and discontented Look, for the Uneasiness you have at the Expence. 'Tis absurd to keep account of all that your Guests eat, and how often they call for a Glass of Wine.

A Man's vex'd with a Feast where Stinginess is mingled with Magnificence; a mistaken and mis-tim'd Thrift dishonours the Entertainment, and poysons the Pleasure of the Company.

At Table we ought carefully to avoid whatever may give Disquiet to the Company. 'Tis a Point of Ill-breeding to speak of certain loathsome Distempers, Remedies, Physicians; all these Things are apt to raise Ideas that turn the Stomach, and deaden the Appetite; nor ought we to mention certain Insects which delicate Persons can't bear the sight or thoughts of.

The Sick amuse their Melancholy, and alleviate their Illness by speaking of it; the Attention we give them comforts them, and in some sort mitigates the Acuteness of their Pain; but they ought not to abuse the Complaisance of those that listen to them, nor enumerate too exactly the Circumstances of their Disease, and the Success of Remedies.

Generally speaking, we ought never to allow ourselves Raillery, for they who seem to take it patiently have a secret Rage within. It requires great Strength of Mind to bear to be rally'd

22 *Reflections upon* Ridicule.

rally'd before Persons we esteem. But what Address, what Dexterity is necessary so to season our Railleries, as to offend no body, nor provoke those they light upon? They that have their Heads turn'd to Raillery, can't hope to preserve their Friends.

They chuse rather to run the Risque to their Resentment, than keep in a Jest that will make the Hearers laugh for a Moment, but will leave a mortal Wound in the Breast of the interested Person.

Humour and Drollery, if not well manag'd, have almost the same Effect. 'Tis hard to play the Part of a Banterer; he that attempts it, exposes himself to Trouble, and makes himself ridiculous. It requires Judgment to distinguish what is smart from what is silly. Drollery disgusts when 'tis carry'd too far; you should never banter People, unless you were sure they took it well; and even then, it should be hardly ventur'd: Often those that seem to laugh with the Teeth outward, rage inwardly in their Heart; a merry Saying that escapes you, gives you great Remorse, and draws after it a long Repentance. This is, in pure Frolick, making one's self Enemies for the sake of a Word.

There is no Part harder to be acted, or that demands nicer Regards than that of a Censor; as good a Face as we put upon it, we hardly love those who criticise our Conduct and our Works. A Man exposes himself to great Vexations, that sets up for a *Pedagogue*, and is often but ill paid for the Advice he gives to others :

thers: For why should he intrude himself to correct People, without knowing whether they would take it? or voluntarily expose himself to surly Replies, which they have not in their Command, when they feel themselves attack'd in the most sensible Parts?

When our Friends commit Mistakes that may have ill Consequences, 'tis our Duty to admonish them. 'Tis a nice Attempt, but we must not refuse our Advice to those that want it. The Way is to fetch a Compass about, or in passionate and tender Expressions to wrap up an Advice, which might provoke them if we gave it in a rugged and uncivil Way. To advertise a Person in an Error of the Danger he is in, or to represent to him that he is unwary in his Management, wherein appear abundance of things at which the World murmurs and is offended: To maintain this Character well, 'tis requisite to know the Temper of People, and to cultivate it. We must soften a Reprimand, with obliging and diverting Expressions, or otherwise it will only frighten, instead of having a good Effect.

'Tis not for any great Desire we have to reform others, or to make them better, that we censure them, but to assume an Ascendant over them, and to signify a Superiority of Genius, and this is precisely what disgusts them. Instead of expressing our good Nature, and using a modest and insinuating Way, in admonishing others of their Faults, we discover a Vanity, or Moroseness, or a secret Pleasure of thinking ourselves exempt from the Imperfections we reprehend in them. We

24 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

We are not much oblig'd to People who visit us, only to fall out with us, and all the time of their stay, speak not one obliging Word, but take an ill-natur'd Pleasure in attacking our Conduct, and exposing our Faults.

Is it not much better to be silent, than to open ones Mouth in Reproach of our Neighbour, and to display our Wit at the Expence of another's Reputation? A well-bred Man should never give himself the License to speak ill of Women: 'Tis brutish to tax them with their personal Defects, the Levity of their Mind, or some unlucky Adventure of their Life, and to let such Words escape him, as are affronting or contemptuous. 'Tis an obsolete Eloquence to pity their Disgraces, and to testify a studied Compassion, the better to act the Farce, and conceal the Poison of the Invective.

Methinks there's a kind of Cruelty in speaking disobliging Things before People, which disturb them, and put them out of Countenance. A malicious Word sometimes vexes a Man more than an Affair of Consequence. These sorts of Trifles disturb the Joy, ruin the Pleasure of Society, impoison Life, and have frequently mischievous Effects.

'Tis hardly possible to avoid observing some Faults, they are so very obvious; but we should sometimes dissemble the seeing them, at least we should not speak of them, nor uncivilly upbraid their Authors with them; it must be Impertinence and Affectation, not to be able to bear the Imperfections and Fooleries
of

of others. This pretended Delicacy is often the sign of a little Understanding, or of a great Presumption.

They that are so clear-sighted as to the least Defects of others, and rudely tax them with them, consider themselves with wonderfull Complacency, and set up for Patterns. If they were censur'd with the same Severity, it might, perhaps, be done more justly, but we must not make Reprisals: Their Incivility in attacking us, does not privilege us to attack them, nor to be rude by their Example.

A nice way of reprehending those who commit Mistakes, is to do it in general, and without directly addressing to the Person who has forgot himself, to spare him the Confusion of it; this indirect Way more effectually gains its Point, because it reproves without the sharpness of a Reprimand. If the Fault be of no Consequence, 'tis better to seem ignorant of it, than to censure it; but if it be of that Nature, that we are oblig'd in Duty, Decency and Friendship, to admonish him that's guilty of it, it ought to be done with all the Precautions and Softnings possible to be applied.

Men are in some sort obliged to be more solicitous about making themselves agreeable than learned: For of what use is so profound Erudition, if their Looks be forbidding, and their Behaviour disgustful? 'Tis purchasing at too great a Price, some good Things they drop from time to time, to bear their frantick Humours.

C

A Man

26 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

A Man inebriated with his Science, thinks all the World considers him as the Phenix of Wit. Every Step he makes, and Word he speaks, shews how well satisfied he is with himself; and his Contempt of others makes him look upon them with an Air of Pity. Of what use now to conversing in the World, is an Erudition so savage and so full of Presumption? Would it not be better to be less Knowing and more Obliging?

I have been at a loss to conjecture, why People bred in Colleges are commonly uncomplaisant and unpolite. The Science they there imbibe, ought not to have so ill an Effect upon their Mind, as to warp instead of straitning it. I am apt to think, that the Custom of Disputing, and Abusing one another in *Latin*, renders them ungovernable, and incapable of plying and buckling their Sentiments to the Temper and Frame of others.

The Reason why the Learned by Profession are so unacceptable to Men of Breeding, is, that they study not the World, but only consult their Books; a continual Application to what they have read, distracts their Thoughts, and buries them in themselves. They hardly hear what you say to them, and answer in a languishing manner, common Conversation seeming too ignoble to merit their Attention. Were it not more eligible to understand a little less of *Greek* and *Latin*, and not to bury themselves with the Dead, that they might learn to converse among the Living?

'Tis

'Tis usual enough to see these People play the Pedants, when they think they have any Learning; they are always using technical Terms, which they maim and place preposterously; if any other undertakes to speak to them, they implore him Silence with a Doctor's Gravity and a loud Laugh, to manifest his Ignorance. This way of recommending one's self, at another's Prejudice, is very rude, and procures only Contempt instead of the desired Praises. The truly learned make no Pretensions. They never speak but when their Opinion is ask'd, which they always offer with Reserve and a certain Modesty, which gives a great heightening to their Merit, and the ingenious Things they say.

A Man loses more than is imagin'd by neglecting outward Appearances; that Negligence sometimes ruins in a Moment all the Esteem People had of you before they knew you. *Theodemus* is a learned and worthy Man, but he is rustical and unpolite, and has too little Complaisance for those he speaks to, and therefore he is shunn'd; the great Reputation his Learning has acquir'd him, does him less Honour because he wants Agreements and Politeness.

Few People get quit of their Unpoliteness, because they are not sensible of it; they think themselves affable, easy, conversant, engaging, and of a smooth Conversation; and they can't entertain a Suspicion that they are regarded, as inconvertible, rough-hewn, rude and fantastical, that keep fair with no body,

28 *Reflections upon* Ridicule.

but fall foul upon all they converse with, almost without thinking of it, and even without designing it. Unpoliteness is a Vice that gives the World a Right to complain of us and our Conduct, from our Words, our Actions and our Ways; on the contrary, a Spirit of Politeness, as a great Master on this Subject has defin'd it, *is a certain Attention, that both from our Words and Behaviour, makes others satisfied with us and themselves.*

The School of the World is the speediest Remedy against Unpoliteness; a Man insensibly receives a Tincture of good Breeding and Civility, by frequently seeing polite Persons: A Commerce with those we respect, infuses Complaisance, good Nature and Agreeableness, but then we must consider them attentively. There are Thousands that spend all their Lives in making Visits, without growing more Polite or Genteel, because they make no Reflection upon what is taking in others, and what is disgustful and clownish in themselves.

Theocrina was born at Court, which was, as we may say, a Cradle to her; she has always lived in it, and the Rank she holds, makes her continually visited by the politest Courtiers. Nevertheless she knows not the Art of Living, she is haughty, intractable, contemptuous, and every body complains of her ill Usage; and were it not for the Occasion People have for her Interest, and her Husband's Favour, she would be left to keep her Rudeness and Incivilities to herself.

Were

Concerning Unpoliteness. 29

Were we but at the Pains to observe the Extravagancies of others, and the ill Effects of them, we should be cautious how we fell into them. He that sees with his Eyes, how ridiculous and impertinent a Man is who has no Complaisance, will study to be complaisant. We must do Justice upon ourselves, and be persuaded that our Imperfections offend others as much as those of others offend us.

Indiscretion and senseless Behaviour, are the Effects of Unpoliteness; on the contrary, Reservedness and Discretion lead easily to Politeness; they hinder us from a heedless Way of Talk, and inspire us with such just Measures, as to forget ourselves in nothing.

Civility, Politeness, Complaisance, are Virtues of so difficult Practice, because they are found in so very few. We observe in the generality of Men such odd Irregularities, as we know not what to make of. You'll say, Self-Love and Interest are the Cause of them. But this, methinks, is reasoning very ill. The surest way to win People to our Interests, and to engage them to do us Service, is to prevent them by a courteous and insinuating Behaviour, by Complaisances and Affinities. On the contrary, Roughness, Unpoliteness, Bluntness, exasperate them, and oblige them sometimes to declare against us, however inclinable to do us Service.

The shortest and easiest way to insinuate ourselves into others Favour, is to adapt ourselves as much as possible to their Humours and Caprices; which requires good Sense and

30 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

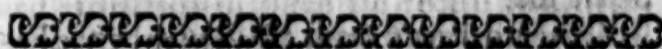
Management ; we are often obliged to subdue our Tempers and renounce our own Judgment, Inclinations and Humour, to adapt the Taste and Humour of others, and espouse all their Inclinations ; when a Man is arriv'd to that Point he is sure of pleasing. But this kind of Philosophy is difficultly obtain'd.

A Man must restrain and manage himself, he must be able to sacrifice his Pleasure, and even something of his Interests, to come up to this highest Point of good Breeding ; for if it be only external, borrowed, and artificial, it will not be able to subsist in the Instances wherein we shall have most occasion for it.

The World is full of fantastick Creatures, who abuse the Deference and Civilities we pay them, and often put the Complaisance of others to terrible Tests : A Man ought not to descend to a slavish and glaring Complaisance ; there are Bounds and Measures to be observ'd in it as in every thing else. 'Tis good to know how far Complaisance ought to go ; if it be excessive and creeping, it grows insipid and shocking, instead of having a good Effect. The Secret consists in finding a just *Medium* betwixt the Insipidness of Flattery, and the Sowreness of Unpoliteness.

Some think they are arriv'd to the Perfection of good Manners, because they make it their Practice indifferently to praise all the World, and even upon Subjects that merit not the least Attention. These misplac'd and trivial Praises make their Stomachs rise to whom they are address'd, if they have any Remains of Reason

son or Judgment, and are not wholly intoxicated with their own Merit. If these everlasting Panegyriste are not cautious, they run into impertinent Excesses that make the Hearers sweat; they are no sooner enter'd into the Room where the Company is met, but they carefully view its Situation; they praise the Ceiling, the Alcove, the Bed, the Elbow-Chair, the Fire-Fan that is offer'd them, and the little barking Dog. But they are inexhaustible upon the Charms of the Lady, and often their Encomiums are exactly contrary to what they should be. I have heard *Lycas*, in praising *Lorifile*, tell her, that she has the prettiest Shape in the World. She's a gigantick Creature, taller by half a Foot than she ought to be, to be well proportion'd: These profess'd Praisers, resemble People that are drowning, they lay hold on every thing they meet with: but that which they think extream good Breeding, is extream Impertinence.



Concerning Indiscretion.

AN indiscreet Man is not Master of his Words, his Actions or his Motions; his Secrets escape him whether he will or no, and he talks when he ought to hold his Tongue; he is hair-brain'd, rough, without Regard either to the Quality of Persons, or the Nature

32 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

of things intrusted to him; he intrudes into Places where his Company is not desir'd, and thrusts himself into Affairs wherein he has nothing to do; he imparts his Secrets against his own Interests, and to the Prejudice of his Friends.

An indiscreet Man is the Pest of Conversation; they that speak in his Presence, are always upon the *Punctilio*, and under Torture and Constraint, for he makes them speak contrary to their Meaning, and obliges them to be continually explaining themselves, and making long Apologies to justify their Intentions; he goes and tells People the disobliging Things that have been said of them, and quotes his Authors for it. This is the way of him; nor does he ever correct himself for his Indiscretion, which has drawn him into so many Faults, and expos'd him to such shameful Reproaches, which is the Reason that he is shunn'd and fear'd as a dangerous Man, who by his want of Brains, ruins his own Affairs, and those of others too.

Crino is deliver'd from the *Bastile* by the Favour of his Friends, who employ'd all their Interest to rescue him from the Precipice, where his Indiscretion cast him; scarce is his Head above Water, but he is ready to fall back into the same Ruin, by the same Indiscretion; he speaks with the same Liberty of things that ought to be a Mystery to him, and are above his Genius; he is perfectly incorrigible; 'tis the Effect of his Stars and Destiny, his Indiscretion incapacitates him to profit by his own Disgraces.

In-

Concerning Indiscretion. 33

Indiscretion is an inexhaustible Source of Impertinencies, which destroys the Pleasures of Conversation and civil Society. The indiscreet are fit for nothing, incapable of any Business wherein Secrecy is required; they make themselves Ridiculous without perceiving it, because they want Judgment, and make not sufficient Reflexion to observe their own Extravagancies. 'Tis, perhaps, a Vice that is hardest to be cur'd, because a Man does not find it out. It must be some vexatious Affair that can open the Eyes of the Indiscreet, and give them more Precaution, as resembling in some sort Hounds, which nothing disciplines like good sound Beating.

Favorinus's Indiscretion is an Easiness, or natural Imbecility, which betrays the Command of himself and his Words. If the Secrecies you have committed to him, drop from him continually, 'tis not from any Ill-will or Desire of Mischief he makes this ill use of them; but his easy and complaisant Temper, and earnestness to please the People he converses with, makes him forget the Importance of the Affairs you have reposed in him; he betrays himself and his Friends, and all this without discerning or reflecting.

'Tis a great Indiscretion to mention others Faults before those who are guilty of the same; to despise *Celidan*, who counterfeits Quality, before *Gerontes*, who is only an upstart Tradesman, and who would be thought Noble; but 'tis the height of Impertinence to blame in others the same Faults ourselves may be just-

34 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

ly charg'd with, and which are more sensible and gross in us than in those we censure.

How many vexatious Moments might we save ourselves, did we not meddle with others Business, nor take upon us to set them right, when we see them make any false Steps? A Man may see all, that has good Eyes, but he will divulge nothing, if he is concern'd for his Repose; when a Man has heard all, he ought to have the Discretion to be silent.

Self-Love suffers by this Retention, so glad we are to find fault and publish others Failings; for this Censure seems to lower their Sails, and give us a Degree of Superiority above them: We should, however, have the Discretion to suppress our Observations on our Neighbours, when they are not to their Advantage: But where is the Man of that Empire over himself, as to keep in a Saying that may fret his Rivals, and to deny himself the Ill-natur'd Pleasure of saying all the Ill of them that he knows?

Be cautious how you engage too lightly in promising your Pains and Assistance to those that ask them. The promis'd Persons have Right to demand the Performance of your Word. Some there are, that in offering their Services, are fully purpos'd to do nothing of what they say, and when you have occasion for them, fly to Subterfuges and base Pretences. This Tricking proves frequently the Mis-carriage of very important Affairs, because we depended upon them, and find our Measures broken. 'Tis a certain Mark of a wretched Mind,

Mind, or a foolish Vanity, to promise every body, and keep touch with no body.

Would not one say, in seeing with what Assurance *Florimond* promises to protect you in an Affair of Moment, that he is in earnest to serve you, and that you may depend upon him? You no sooner turn your Back, but he makes the same Offers to all that accost him, even though he is unacquainted with their Names: He burdens himself with all your Memories, and expresses Zeal and Warmth for your Interests; but after you have been a long time amus'd with Offers of his Services, you are at last undeceiv'd, and find the Vanity and Emptiness of his Professions. Some there are that promise, because they have not Power to deny; 'tis Weakness of Mind, or the Effect of a mistaken Civility. It would be more civil and obliging to say plainly, you can't do what is desir'd, than to amuse People with fair Words, which often put them upon false Measures.

Polymas, embracing and kissing you, promised you his good Offices in a gracious and affectionate Manner; but it was the Kisses and Embraces that charm'd you, and fill'd you with imaginary Hopes. *Brutus* told you, with an harsh and forbidding Look, that he could not do what you desir'd of him, and that 'twas to no purpose to importune him any more with your Business: If I were to chuse, I should prefer the blunt and unpolite Sincerity of this Man, before the fruitless Carresses of the other.

If

36 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

If you have a mind to live at rest, let others go on in their own way, except you are to answer for their Conduct. Has any thing been told you, tell it not again, and rarely give Advice; if it don't succeed, the Blame is laid on you, and you are to warrant the Event. Determine not too rashly, lest you expose your self to the Hatred of one of the Parties. 'Tis a great Indiscretion to condemn highly without being sure of your Matter. If your Censure be unreasonable, extravagant or unjust, 'tis you that incur the Ridicule. You should be equally cautious of approving or commending what deserves neither Praise nor Approbation, that being commonly a sign of want of Taste, or of an ill Judgment.

General and Publick Things are expos'd to the Judgment of all the World, and every one may determine of them as he pleases. They that do things deserving Censure, and take no pains to conceal them, are to blame if they take it amiss that they incur it: They should reason thus with themselves, the Publick will have no Indulgence for us, if we have no Respect for ourselves. 'Tis too late to think of appeasing it, when the Evil is done, and a Man is, as we may say, running the Gantlet of the Criticks.

Celimene is constantly complaining that she is unmercifully handled by hideous Lampoons upon her Conduct. 'Tis her own Fault, she has no Care of her Reputation: She is too indiscreet and giddy to be subject to Precautions; she is first in applauding her self for her In-

Intrigues; she talks frankly of her Commerce and Adventures before all Companies. The Publick does but follow her Example, and take the same Liberty to talk of her. What reason then has she to complain?

'Tis a Point of Indiscretion to mix one's self uncivily in the Company of Persons who are discoursing about Business, and would have no Witnesses of what they say. Why should a Man make himself regarded as an Impertinent? 'Tis easy to read in the Face of those we accost, whether our Company be acceptable or burthensome. But the good Opinion every one entertains of his own Merit, blinds him, and prevents his perceiving that he is troublesome.

Be not so indiscreet as to rush in bluntly upon Women, and without giving them time to appear with Advantage; they don't love to be surpriz'd, or easily pardon a Man who allows them not Leisure to set off themselves, by adding to their natural Beauty what they borrow from Art and Invention.

'Tis an ill way to secure the Virtue of a Woman, to express a Distrust of her, and too cautiously to observe her Conduct; that Constraint does but sharpen her Wit to invent Ways and Means of shaking off so heavy a Yoke: Nor ought a Husband to be so docile and commodious, as to see without Umbrage his Wife caress'd by Men of Merit. Let him not be lull'd to sleep with the Maxims of Virtue she is eternally dictating: Those affected Appearances, those perpetual Discourses of
Mo-

38 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

Morality and Virtue, are but counterfeit Glarings to dazzle a too credulous Husband.

I am apt to think, that the generality of Women, who write so freely and familiarly to Men, are no Mistresses of Politicks, and that they may be excus'd as to their Intentions; but they ought to be a little more reserv'd upon that Head, and more tenacious of their Letters; tho' commonly they have no ill Meaning, they employ tender and passionate Expressions, and believe, that their Letters, as obliging as they are, can have no ill Consequence. Heretofore, a Woman who had written in this Stile, should have been deem'd half deflower'd; the World is less severe at present, however, that Itch of Writing denotes a Mind form'd to Intrigues, and a great Fund of Coquetry.

A Woman that is too forward in surrendring, and makes all the Advances, is mightily mistaken, if she thinks to be belov'd. Is it to please the Men that the Women praise their Beauty, their Charms and their Merit, and to say to them all the fine Things that the Men should say to themselves? These Encomiums are very ill plac'd; the Women that thus throw themselves into the Arms of their Lovers, meet with no other Recompence but Scorn and Contempt for it.

For some Years past, the Women have had the Reproach of making all the Advances, and corrupting the Men; amongst them there have been some, who, with a great Beauty, and a great deal of Merit, have given themselves too
much

much Freedom; those of less Merit, who yet would have Admirers, have taken the same Course; and this is the Origin of that great License which still reigns amongst the Women. We find so few of them modest and regular, that we are much oblig'd to those who do their Duty, and still maintain the Honour of their Sex, which is fallen into Discredit, by the ill Conduct of five or six giddy Creatures, who have given the Shock to the rest.

A Woman is arriv'd to the highest Pitch of Impudence, when she is no longer concern'd about what the World says of her Conduct; there are some of them so extravagant, as to chuse to have Ill said of them, rather than Nothing: They that have Infirmities should, at least, methinks, keep fair with the Publick, and observe Measures so far, as to save Appearances. But Women of a certain Character, would despise their Pleasures as insipid, if all the World was not witness of them, and if they did not give occasion to have more ill thought of them than they are really guilty of. Others, who have still some remainder of Modesty and Discretion, attempt to excuse themselves; 'tis their continual Apology, that their Intentions are good, and they value not Trifles: Their Misfortune is not to be believ'd, since the World will prefer the Evidence of its own Eyes before all that they can say. To spend Night and Day successively at play with Men, who frequent them at all Hours; to go, as they do, without any reserve, into suspected Places; to entertain

40 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

tain Familiarities with Persons of a blemish'd Conduct; to make Confidants only of People of ill Fame, are almost manifest Symptoms of a corrupt Heart, and great Dispositions to Lewdness.

The Hopes of Matrimony make young Women take such Liberty as ruins their Reputation; for their Intentions are not legible, and we judge of them only by their Behaviour and Appearances; the very Pretence they use for giving themselves this Loose, ought to make them more circumspect and reserv'd; the Easiness they manifest, and the Liberties they allow those that make their Addresses to them, are Signs of Folly, though they look on them as Characters of Love and Passion. This mistaken Indulgence destroys all the Esteem their Lovers might have for them, if they manag'd more, and were not so tractable; this it is that extinguishes the Desire of Marriage, and makes them only consider'd as Amusements.

Conversation is a sort of Commerce, towards which every one ought to furnish their Quota, that is, to hear and speak in his Turn. 'Tis acting against the Rules of Honesty and the Laws of Commerce to monopolize all, and deprive others of the Share they have in the Gain; 'tis, in like manner, a kind of Injustice in those who compose the Circle, always to usurp the Talk. If your design by it is to make a shew of your Parts, and to procure Esteem, you quite mistake your Interests; for
you

you exasperate those against you, whom you thus force to silence, who can't bear the Ascendant you give yourself, and the Degree of Superiority you assume.

'Tis no novel Custom for a Man to love to talk of himself, of his Children and his Family, and to be always full of their Commendation; but if these Panegyrist perceive'd how wearisome and fatiguing they are, they would, perhaps, have more Discretion, and greater Regard to the Patience of their Hearers, who suffer them with Pain. 'Tis something incomprehensible, that they who perpetually praise themselves, never open their Lips but to speak ill of others; it looks as if they meant to make their own Figures appear brighter by these Shades, and to recommend their own Conduct, by censuring that of their Neighbours.

It rarely happens, that they who speak much, can for any long time please Men of Sense; great Talkers think to distinguish themselves and dazzle others, by that inexhaustible flow of Tongue, whereas they disgust every body by their Babble, it being impossible almost for them to prevent abundance of Extravagancies. It's much easier to speak justly, by speaking little; above all, great Care should be taken, to say nothing disobliging to any one; 'tis a Law that an honest Man ought to impose upon himself. Keep in that Jest within your Teeth, that is ready to burst through; it will excite Laughter, perhaps, for a Moment, but it will make an eternal Wound

42 *Reflections upon* Ridicule.

Wound in the Heart of him you expose by it; and he will never pardon you.

A Man can't do the least thing before *Alcidor*, but you fall under his insipid Censure. If you drop a Word against the Accuracy of the Language, he bursts out a Laughing, and exposes the Incongruity; he cites you all the Criticks to convince you of your Error, and turning to the rest of the Company, testifies how much he pities you, and how well satisfy'd he is with himself.

Be not eager to blame those, who for want of Genius or Ability, succeed not in what they undertake; laugh not at their Follies, nor add Confusion to their Discontent which their ill Success has given them.

The first Thought that occurs upon seeing a Folly, is to ridicule it and expose the Author; if we judg'd of others by ourselves, and reflected how odious those appear to us, who make a Jest of us on the like Occasions, we should be more reserv'd when others are guilty of an Impertinence, and should not express a malicious Joy at their Confusion.

'Tis a Weakness natural to all Men, to give the Narrative to People at first sight, of all their Fortune and Affairs, which they always describe with all the Advantages imaginable; they do it with a Design of pleasing, and being esteem'd, but 'tis a Foolery that makes them look'd on as Impertinents.

I travell'd in a Stage-Coach three hundred Miles together with *Celadon*; during the whole Journey he found Subject of Discourse, in talk-

talking to me of Himself, his Wife and his Children, his City and Country-Houses, his Farmers and his Horses; whatever Digressions I made, he still reduced the Discourse to the same Subject; had he made any Reflection, he had found in my distracted Eyes, the little Attention I gave to his tiresome Discourse, which no ways touch'd or concern'd me. But the Pleasure great Talkers take in their run of Tattle, hinders them from seeing how they weary others Patience, and lay them to sleep.

Sincerity does not oblige us always to say whatever we think; if you are too curiously examin'd, if you are press'd to speak upon certain Matters, which you can't explain without injuring a third Person or yourself, take heed how you open your Mind; or suffer yourself to be penetrated; make use of general Answers, which serve only to beat about the Bush, and say nothing positive. Equitable Persons ought not to take it amiss, that you make a Mystery of things that demand Secrecy, and which you cannot divulge without betraying your Friends or without betraying yourself.

'Tis an Indiscretion to trust Women with an important Secret; tho' we find some of them discreet, the generality are not sufficient Mistresses of what they say. A Secret escapes them whether they will or no, without their perceiving it or desiring to discover it. 'Tis much worse, when they have an Engagement; their Heart is too strong for their Head, and however reserv'd they think they are, they have

44 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

have not the Power to conceal any thing from a Lover; their own and their Friends Interest falls a Sacrifice to their Passion: Familiarity with Women can't but be ruinous, unless Reason governs the Heart.

This Censure ought not to offend the Ladies; 'tis well known there are many who have all the Discretion and Prudence that can be desir'd, and who are even more reserv'd than the Men; but generally speaking, 'tis a blameable Indiscretion to trust them with Things of Importance, before their Character is well known, and they must acknowledge it themselves, if they will speak sincerely.

The Character of a Confident requires a vast Complaisance; a Man possess'd and full of any engaging Passion, thinks every thing to be very important that has any relation to it; but those who unpassionately hear him, regard his Mystery as important Trifles. We can't expect Indifference and cold Blood from a Man under the Influence of a great Passion, or a grand Affair that he is pierc'd with; but it were to be wish'd, at least, that he had the Discretion not to fatigue his Friends with insignificant Secrets, when he has nothing to confide to them.

Did we consider the Fatigue they give us, who teize us continually with their Affairs, their Intrigues, their Successes and their Law-Suits, we should not so often importune others with our Narratives, which can't chuse but be disagreeable, by the little Interest they have in them. How extream is the Injustice of Men!
what-

whatever personally relates to them, always appears very considerable, whilst they are but superficially affected with the most important Affairs of others.

What a Torment is it to hear Gamesters eternally talking of their Gains and Losses, enumerating all the Turns and Accidents that happen'd in their Play, as if it were a material Point to know them; naming all the Persons they plaid with, whose Pictures they draw, handsome or ugly, as the Maggot bites. All Gamesters have the same Jargon; *That's a Cut-Throat! first Hand; he has dealt Thrice; he has won or lost two hundred Guineas at a sitting!* This is the Stile, and all that's wanting is to carry a Pack of Cards about them, to give you an ocular Demonstration of all the Hits they have plaid, and to say with the Impertinent in the Comedy, in cursing the Divinity presiding over Gaming: *A six of Hearts, Two Points!* Was ever such Fortune?

'Tis only want of Attention not to perceive the Uneasiness of People, to whom our Company is troublesome; for 'tis easy enough to observe that our Visits are unwelcome.

Every Body has always so good an Opinion of himself, as to believe his Company is every where acceptable, and that he is received with Pleasure; Why is this? but that a Man is acquainted with himself, and views himself always on his best side. The Prospect of our Faults is ungrateful to us, and we throw off our Eyes for fear we should perceive them; there is nothing Men are more deficient in, than

than in knowing their own Characters. I know not how this Science comes to be so much neglected; we spend a great deal of Time in learning useless Things, but take no Pains in the Study of our selves, and in opening the Folds and Doubles of our Hearts: We should make fewer false Steps, and should fall into less Extravagancies, if we better understood our selves.

Narcissus comes to *Celantes* with an Assuming Air, he smiles upon the Company, he applauds himself, he sparkles, he talks of his Finery; he enters, like any Woman, into the Particularities of his Dress; he values himself upon his Periwig, and the genteelness of his Habit: But now, this is the Business of the Periwig-maker and the Taylor; that which is yours, *Narcissus*, are the Impertinences you speak, and are not aware of, those you may reckon wholly to your own Account; your imbroider'd Coat does not cover you from being consider'd as a Fool.

Men of Leisure and no Business think every Body like them; they settle themselves in an Elbow-Chair, not to quit it the whole Afternoon; they consider not, that those they fatigue with their tedious Stories and frivolous News, are not at leisure to hear them; that Business of Concern calls them another way: But yet we dare not, out of Decency, dismiss Persons of a certain Character, nor let them see that we are tired with their Visits; 'tis more eligible to bear with them, than to make them our Enemies. Is it not better to live at home, expos'd

pos'd to the Uneasiness of Solitude, than go to trouble others with Visits and Discourses that enrage them.

They that are above us by their Quality or their Birth, can't bear we should excel, or even equal them, in the Qualities which they value themselves upon. Forbear to rival a Man who can humble you, or ruin you with Impunity; this Rivalry must be fatal to you; conceal therefore part of your Talents, and consider that 'tis greater Wit than is imagin'd, not to suffer all your Wit to appear. Remember what a very ingenious Courtier said once to his Friends, who upbraided him with his too great Complaisance for the Emperor, who had made ill Verses and yet was charm'd with them. *Would you have me, says he, have more Sense than a Man who commands twelve Legions, and can banish me?*

If you suffer your Politicks to be perceiv'd, you are politick to no purpose; you'll be consider'd only as a Spy, and your Company will be always upon their Guard, and so many Precautions will be taken against your Artifices, as to disappoint the use of them.

The Commerce of most People turns only upon Cunning; their Abilities consist only in laying Snares, and trepanning those whom they amuse by the Pretences of a false Sincerity. 'Tis so much the harder to arm ourselves against their Artifices, because we have no Distrust of them, nor stand upon our Guard. We can't suspect a Man who talks to us as his Confidants, and pretends to intrust us with his Secrets,

48 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

crets, that he has pitch'd upon us for his Bubbles.

The Distinctions Parents have for some of their Children to the Prejudice of the rest, are attended always with ill Consequences, if they have the Indiscretion to discover their Thoughts, and 'tis almost impossible to conceal them; the greater Affection they have for some, the greater Indifference, or even Aversion they have for others; this difference of Esteem ruins the mutual Friendship which Children of the same Family owe each other, as exciting Jealousies amongst them: Fathers and Mothers have an hard Task to keep their Affections evenly pois'd, with respect to all their Children; but they ought artfully to dissemble their Preference, and to prevent the Effects of it; that which cannot be pardon'd them, is their openly declaring their Aversion for the one, and a blind Passion for the others whom they have chosen for their Darlings; they sacrifice all to the Fortune of these Fondlings, and oblige the others by their repeated Hardships, to betake themselves to ways of Life repugnant to their Natures.

Celadon's Family is absolutely ruin'd by the Misunderstanding risen amongst his Children; he had a vast Estate, which he very unequally divided by his Will; he had an extravagant and indiscreet Passion for one of the younger Sons, to whom he bequeath'd the greatest part of his Fortune. This Distinction alarm'd all the rest, and united them against their Brother; they have been at Law all their

their Life to make void the Will, chusing rather to ruin all their Estate, than to leave it to their Brother, and see him richer than themselves.

What do Masters think of, who talk so freely of their Affairs before their Servants? Can they depend upon the Discretion of these servile Souls form'd of Mud? They can seldom forbear telling all they have heard, and 'tis by this Rascality, the most important Secrets of the Masters are reveal'd. Servants have a wonderful Curiosity to know all, and as great an Itch to tell it again; it seems as if they meant to compensate themselves hereby, for the Pains and Misery of their Servitude. Vexation, Interest, and Folly, makes them speak, and sometimes their Malice and ill Nature.

Most young People are too frothy, and talk without knowing what they say. Do they fear, that if they spoke less, we should have but a bad Opinion of their Parts? There is a Way of Hearing, which easily convinces that Stupidity is not the Occasion of our Silence: But suppose the Worst, is it not better to leave People dubious whether they have Wit, than to convince them by their impertinent Discourse that they have none?

That which makes us venture to talk with such Assurance, is the Persuasion we are under, that what we say is heard with Pleasure. We laugh with those that laugh at our Follies, and don't perceive ourselves to be the ridiculous Object. What a Service would it be to a Man, too conceited of his Merit, could we

D

undeceive

50 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

undeceive him? How many Extravagancies would this save him? But where is the Hand that is delicate and bold enough to touch this Cataract? And, what Curses might not the Physician expect, who should perform so wonderful an Operation?

That which costs least to give, said a brave Man, *is Counsel*: 'Tis a very nice Matter, which deserves to be maturely weigh'd. One comes and consults you upon a Subject that requires great Consideration, you answer him at hazard, he follows your Advice, and unseasonably embarks in an Affair, the Success whereof is doubtful; what Reproaches are you not justly obnoxious to, if the Event prove unhappy?

Without knowing well the Character and docil Temper of those you have to do with, you should be very reserv'd in giving your Advice. Instead of rendring yourself necessary, you are regarded as a troublesome Man, who have always some unlucky News to tell, and are always finding Fault. The Generality of Mankind are well enough instructed in their Duties: If they commit Faults, it is not out of Ignorance, for they know better than they do, and what you say to them is very insignificant. It requires so much Circumspection to give others advice, that the wisest Men seldom hazard to do it. Most People look upon those Advices as Reprimands, and they wound instead of curing them; you become the Enemy of those whom you would reduce to their Duty, and save the Regret of playing the Fool.

If

If you venture to make your Remonstrances and they are ill receiv'd, suffer not any Indignation to appear, nor fall out with them about it; you would be very capricious and ill-humoured, should you think to impose your Councils on all the World, and resent their taking other Resolutions; that Chagrin is nothing but a Delicacy of Self-Love; there's nothing so formidable as a Friend, who takes advantage of his Experience, to propose all his Advices to us as Laws, and with a magisterial Ayre; who would debar us of the Privilege of examining what he says, and force our Assent by his Authority, rather than win it by Insinuations.

The World is full of People that report whatever they hear said, that disfigure and empyson it; 'tis a villanous Part, and a certain Means to be hated and despis'd. You don't much oblige a Man by relating to him the ill Things that have been said of him: you are quickly paid for your Indiscretion, and you become the first Object of his Aversion and Resentment.

A Man must be very bold to rally others upon their Faults or Conduct; 'tis giving them a Sort of Right to rally you in their turn. The Vexation a Man feels in being expos'd to his Face, quickens his Understanding to perceive the Faults of his Censors; there is no need of long Consideration always to find Repartees, since the same Reproaches they cast on others, may commonly, with greater Justice, be retorted upon them. *Philemon* upbraids

52 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

Sofias with the Meanness of his Birth, when every body knows that *Philemon's* Father is a Retailer of Cloth in a Town not a hundred Miles from *London*. If you are wise and love your own repose, never attack a Woman upon her Beauty, when she sets up for handsome, nor upon her Conduct when she affects to be thought discreet; these are Matters of a very nice Nature, and wound to the very Soul of them.

Raillery is a Thing of difficult and even dangerous Practice, unless it be attemper'd with certain Circumstances which remove its Sting and Gall; it ought to divert the Indifferent, without wounding the Interest'd, which are two things difficultly combin'd. The End of fine Raillery is to quicken Conversation; if you criticize the Follies or Infirmities of others you offend them; you are to break off and Change the Discourse, as soon as you perceive the Mirth to disconcert, or sower those it is address'd to; you run the Risque of a serious Trouble, occasion'd by a frivolous Thing, ill interpreted, and taken by the wrong Handle.

How many Quarrels daily happen for Words accidentally dropt? If the Person they are address'd to is affronted, and demands an Explication, we are not always in the Humour to content him, we despise his Resentment; if he perseveres to demand Satisfaction, we laugh at his Threats and Blustering; that which in the Beginning was only a Jest and a meer Trifle, grows a very serious Business,
and

and the Cause of great Conteſts that have ſometimes very fatal Effects.

They that jeſt on others, don't always mean to offend them; they do it rather to have the Pleaſure of ſaying a witty Thing, than any premeditated Deſign to diſoblige them; Men of Wit, who underſtand Raillery, are always on the Laughter-ſide, and contribute ſomething to the Intention of the Speaker. The Man that's downright and all of a Piece, fully aggravates what is ſaid, and by the Diſturbances he manifeſts, revives the Raillery, which would have died on its own accord.

We find, in Societies, People of a certain Character, which ſeem born for nothing elſe but to ſay diſobliging Things; a Man muſt not trip before them; they criticize all the Faults that are committed in their Preſence, and droll upon them, even to the fatiguing thoſe that hear them. Others are naturally ſurly; their Ways, the Sound of their Voice, have ſomething Savage in them, and it ſeems that they open not their Mouth but to affront one or other.

Does *Dorantes* pretend to be an accompliſh'd Man, by giving horrible Pourtraits of all the Women he is acquainted with? Will he make every body jealous of him, be the Terror of Huſbands and the Bugbear of Lovers? If you'll believe the Romance he makes of Women, there are none that are Regular or Modest; none that he attacks can hold out a Moment againſt his Charms and admirable Merit. How ſottiſh and ridiculous in this Sufficiency?

54 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

And what an abominable thing is it to boast of Favours, which no-body ever thought of shewing him?

Every body knows that 'tis ridiculous to be affected or mysterious, to be conceited or shy; but neither ought we, the first Visit we pay, to be familiar, as if the Acquaintance had been of long Standing; to talk of our most secret Affairs, or to desire People, whom we hardly know, to make us their Confidants; they are perfectly astonish'd at this Familiarity, which is grown up in a Moment.

'Tis a Sign of a prodigious Indiscretion to assume a Familiarity with Persons of an elevated Rank, whose Character commands Respect; these Liberties bespeak a sordid Education, which smells of the Shop, and perfect Ignorance of Decorum. If Persons of a certain Eminency forget themselves, and but ill maintain the Honour of their Birth, others ought not to forget it, but still to continue in Respect.

Antimus, the first time he sees a Woman of Quality, gives himself ridiculous Liberties; he takes her by the Hand, and entertains her with Discourse full of gross Ambiguities, which are neither becoming him that speaks, nor her that hears them. The Spectators can't sufficiently admire the Indiscretion of a Person who thus breaks through all the Rules of Decency, to give full swing to his Humour.

Handsome Women, of ever so little Wit, at first, eclipse whatever comes before them, because few People make Reflexion: We are surpris'd by their Beauty, before we have time

to

to bethink ourselves ; 'Tis only Custom that can recover us from this first Illusion ; the wretched Things they say dissipate the Charm, and we are tired at last with continual gazing on a fine Picture. A Woman of great Beauty and little Wit ought to keep a politick Silence, if she has Sense enough to understand her true Interests.

Plotina, by her silly Discourse, and the Follies that escape her, effaces the Impression her Beauty makes on all that behold her : It seems as if Nature had exhausted herself in all those Charms she has lavish'd upon her outward Person ; if she talk'd less it would be impossible not to be captivated by so accomplish'd a Beauty ; but the Misfortune is, she will be always talking, and she seems not to open her Lips but to speak childish and foolish Things ; she sometimes asks such impertinent Questions as makes every body shrug up their Shoulders, amazing them with her Silliness. She one Day ask'd, whether *Cæsar* was a Christian, because he liv'd at *Rome* where the Pope resides. We know indeed that Women are not oblig'd to understand all the Particulars of the *Roman* History ; but there are some things so very obvious, that they can't be ignorant of them without the Imputation of Simplicity.

A Gentleman of the Sword is distinguish'd from the Multitude only by his eminent Quality, and a great Courage supported with an uncommon Prudence ; he must discern the Occasions wherein he ought to expose himself. 'Tis not for a Commander to act the Part of a

56 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

Musquetier or a Trooper; let him be Brave, but not Rash and Fool-hardy. We don't pity those who are necessary to their own Deaths in Places where their Duty did not call them; but when a Man finds himself under such Circumstances as admit of no farther Precautions, let him then give full Scope and Exercise to his Courage.

A Man need have but one violent Passion to ruin the best establish'd Fortune: What then can be expected from those who give themselves up to all the Passions, and plunge into all Sorts of Pleasures? In viewing the Extravagance of some Women, one would think they studied to bring their Affairs into Confusion. They hazard vast Sums at Play, they borrow Money upon excessive Interest, they buy very dear, and sell their Goods at a sordid Price, and put every Thing to pawn. What's this but a total Disorder, a general Dissipation! The Countess of *Merlet*, after she had lost all her Money at *Basset*, sold her Plate, her Tapestry, her Linen, her Petticoats, and the Bed on which she lay.

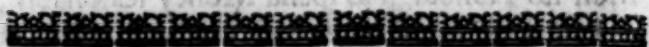
The Ruin of certain Houses is inevitable, where the Husband is only a Fantom, under the Shelter of whose Name all is done, whilst he never knows any thing of the Matter; that Confusion is a certain Presage of the Ruin of Domestick Affairs. An House govern'd in that Manner resembles a Ship that is toss'd at the Pleasure of the Winds, whilst the Pilot takes no Care of it.

Expences

Expences ill plac'd and misunderstood, do a Man no Honour ; to spend Money seasonably, ~~and thereby to manage those you would secure~~ in your Interests, requires Art and Ability. A Man feels for a long Time the counter-Blow of indiscreet Expences ; thousands of People are ridiculous in their Pleasures, they ruin their Affairs without gaining the Friendship of those who are the Cause of their undoing.

'Tis a Point of great Wisdom to proportion a Man's Expences to his Fortune and Possessions, for Dissipation has very mortifying Reflexions ; it goes hard, after having liv'd in Splendor, to want Necessaries, and be continually sensible of the Importunities attending domestick Wants ; they who intoxicate you with their Interests'd Praises, whilst they find a magnificent Table at your House, pretend they don't know you, and despise you when the Disorder of your Affairs has brought you to have occasion for their Assistance.

Should *Florinus* live but Ten Years longer, he would scarce have wherewithal to buy him Bread and Cloaths ; the Treats he gives you can't call Dinners, he daily furnishes out Nuptial Feasts, and he is the Property of his Parasites, who turn his Head with their Praises, who boast his Retinue, his Equipage, and his vast Expence : He has already sold two fine Estates, his Creditors clamour on all Sides, he is forc'd to borrow Money at an extravagant Interest, to have constantly at his Table a crowd of Flatterers, who sell him, at too dear a Rate, their mercenary Encomiums.

*Concerning Affectation.*

Affectation is the Falsification of the whole Person, which deviates from all that is Natural, whereby it might please, to put on an ascetic Ayre, wherewithal to become Ridiculous. It is the Effect of a corrupt Taste, of an extravagant Imagination, of an immoderate and mistaken Desire of pleasing and distinguishing one's Self. The other Vices are confin'd within certain Bounds, and have a particular Object, but *Affectation* diffuses itself over the whole Man, and infects the good Qualities both of Body and Mind. People corrupted with this Vice, have nothing natural in their Way of Talking, Walking, Dressing, turning their Eyes or Head, these are Motions unknown to other Men. In order to speak, there needs no more than to open the Mouth easily, and without Pains; but they seek a Mystery in it, they seem to be mov'd with Springs; it would grieve them to Laugh, Cough, or Spit like the Vulgar; their Disguise reaches even to the Sound of their Voice. To express the most common Things, they use a Jargon that it's the hardest Thing imaginable to understand, 'tis made up of cull'd Words and Paraphrases; their Gravity and their Devotion

votion are tinctur'd with this predominant Vice; they commend and discommend themselves from the same Motive; if they pretend to reject the Eulogies you give them, they suffer their Intentions to appear through their studied Grimaces; tho' they enjoy a perfect Health they are continually complaining of the Delicacy of their Constitution, and take it amiss if you do not sympathize with their imaginary Ailments.

The affected and finical Ayre taints the best Things, and whatever good Qualities a Man has, he needs but this one Frailty to become Ridiculous. If *Emilia* would speak to be understood, if she did not affect too far-fetch'd Expressions, if she did not disguise the Sound of her Voice, which is naturally soft and harmonious; if, being hale and of a florid Complexion, she did not constantly complain of her ill Health, she would pass for a Woman of Sense; but sensible People can't endure her, because of her ridiculous Affectations.

Take heed how you disguise yourself and copy others; stick to Nature if you desire to please, for whatever is fictitious and affected, is always insipid and distastful: You need only open your Eyes and behold *Lucina*, to see the ill Effects of Affectation. She has Wit, and Beauty, and Merit, and yet she is not taking, because she will counterfeit others; she mimicks the Walk of this Lady, the Sound of the Voice of that; she turns her Eyes in a Way that is unnatural; she opens and shuts her Mouth in Measure and Time; she seems to
be

be acted with Wheels and Pullies like a Machine; 'tis a Piece of Clock-work. 'Tis true, she imitates good Patterns, but all she does is offensive, because she has forsaken her own natural Behaviour for a borrowed one of others; in short, she is a bad Copy of excellent Originals.

Celime, where-ever she comes, is declaiming against Gallantry, and sets up for a virtuous and nice Lady, whilst every body knows the Number and Names of her Gallants; no body would trouble their Head, nor think of unravelling her Intrigues, but for her Affectation to be thought a modest and regular Woman. This it is that sharpens Satire, to be expatiating against the Vices her Conscience upbraids her with, and whereof the Publick is not ignorant: This Hypocrisy provokes every body's Laughter, and instead of wiping off the Faults, raiseth a fresh Attention to observe them; the Publick is a clear-sighted and malignant Judge; it is hard to be imposed on, and it seldom pardons the Design of dazzling and surprising it; 'tis more indulgent to those who deal above-board, and confess their Weaknesses.

Lyse ingenuously confesses her Conduct has been bad, and that she is sorry for it; that her Temper over-ru'd her, and that she pities those who tread in the same Paths; she exhorts her Daughter to follow another Train, inculcating perpetually, that Gallantry has mischievous Remorses, and that in Virtue alone consists the Happiness of a Woman. We thank

Lyfe for her Sincerity, and are content to pity her, without Inveſtives; but her Features make no great Impreſſion upon her Daughters, who are more affected with the Examples ſhe has ſhewn them, than the Doctrine which ſhe preaches. They reſemble the young Crabs who follow the retrograde Motion of their Mother.

You would ſain ſeem modeſt, but your Modeſty has an Ayre of Auſterity, which comes too near Morofeneſs. Honest Pleaſures are not inconſiſtent with true Modeſty; there's more of Affectation than Philoſophy in not daring to laugh, when you hear facetious and diverting Things.

As modeſt as a Woman would appear, ſhe ought not to have a moroſe Virtue, nor pretend to be alarm'd at Commendation, when ſhe is praiſed for her Merit, her good Mein or her Beauty; ſhe is more ſenſible of them than any body elſe, and 'tis meer Affectation by a Pretence of Modeſty, to reject with an angry Look the Incenſe that is given her.

The true *medium* is not to manifeſt a Greedineſs of Praiſes, nor to reject them with an affected Diſdain, when we think we deſerve them. Our Intentions are eaſily ſeen through our Diſguiſe; let us civilly receive the Compliments that are made us, when the Flattery is not fulſom; it being a ridiculous Affectation to reſuſe all Commendation, when we have any Sort of Merit.

A Woman makes herſelf ſuſpected when ſhe ſets up for a ſcrupulous Modeſty; this great Af-

62 *Reflections upon* Ridicule.

Affectation of appearing virtuous, is commonly too studied, but the other Extream is still more dangerous and blameable; too fawning and caressing Ways, are Indications of an amorous Soul, and 'tis ill reasoning to think to engage Men by luscious Discourses: Whoever has ever so little Delicacy, is quickly surfeited with so ill-managed and profuse a Complaisance: A too visible Fondness and blind Resignation, in a little time extinguish the Passions we think very lively and well grounded.

Women that are boasting at every turn, that they are no Coquets, that they pity those who take too much Liberty or forget themselves, are greater Coquets than they imagine; but they have some secret Interests to conceal their Motions from those that narrowly watch them; others, whose Conduct is more even, and whose Conscience does not reproach them, act more naturally, and don't over-act the Part of Virtue. 'Tis odds, but they that affect these Grimaces have only a superficial Virtue; their eternal Panegyricks upon Modesty, their disdainful Treatment of those who guard not outward Appearances, are no great Warrants of their Modesty; but that seeming Reservedness serves to dazzle Fools, 'tis a Kind of Veil they throw over their secret Mysteries; 'tis a Varnish that gives Lustre to their false Modesty.

Serenia was always thought to be an accomplished Pattern of Modesty and Regularity; the Publick suffer'd itself to be abus'd by the
the

the Honesty of those modest Maxims she eternally had in her Mouth ; no body gave themselves the Trouble to pry into her Conduct, or disturb her Enjoyment of a false Reputation, which she had artfully usurp'd : She has at last disgrac'd herself by an Intrigue which they made a Noise of in the World and has ruin'd her. The Blaze of this Discovery has remov'd the Veil which conceal'd her Inclinations ; she is consider'd as a Crack, and no reckoning is made of all the Pains she took to hide her secret Intrigues.

Whatever Pretentions Women make, or fine Maxims they deliver in Behalf of Virtue, the Generality are Wantons at the Bottom ; they have an Heart naturally addicted to Gallantry and Intrigues, and nothing but a sublime Virtue can correct this Inclination ; but as this is rarely to be met with, their Bias governs them ; we are oblig'd to them when they'll do so much as constrain themselves, to save outward Appearances. That Constraint is a kind of Homage which they pay to Virtue.

'Tis a pleasant Scene enough for those who know the secret Intrigues of some Women, to hear them haranguing and preaching in the Praise of Modesty ; they can't forbear laughing in their Sleeve to see them vent severe Maxims in a grave and solemn Tone ; some Bubbles are wheedled by these Appearances, but wise Men know how to judge of them.

Rather modestly bear the Praises that are given you and you deserve, than reject them with a mysterious and affected Roughness ; 'tis
2 equally

64 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

equally ridiculous to be too fond of Praise, and to refuse it with too manifest an Affectation; admit what is civilly and obligingly said to you, or dexterously turn off the Discourse, so as they that speak to you may have no Reason to repent their Commendation, nor look upon you as an ill-bred and brutal Man.

'Tis a Sign of a ridiculous Vanity to be too covetous of Praise, and to appear to beg it for every little Trifle; but when you have done any Thing praise-worthy, suffer your self to be told of it, and don't seem to rebuff those who do Justice to your Merit.

The Country-Ladies, who have had but a bad Education, think they are oblig'd to refuse all the Praises that are given them; they sillily disclaim all the Compliments that are made upon their Beauty, their Shape, the good Ayre of their Dance, and the Excellence of their Voice; you would imagine it were an Affront to them to give them the Praises they deserve, and that they thought themselves disgrac'd, if they should receive without Affectation a Tribute we with Pleasure pay to their fine Qualities.

Whence proceeds the Affectation of Talking continually to your Disadvantage? Is it out of Modesty? Would you have all the Ill thought of you, which you say your self? That can't be your Meaning, but you love to talk of yourself at any Rate; This is only the Subtilty of your Vanity, to engage the World to flatter you, and to prove to you that you have

have not really the Defects which you modestly attribute to yourself.

'Tis from the same Motive People talk of their good Qualities and their Faults. Who would think it was from a secret and nice Complacency in herself, that *Isimene* says so often she is not handsome, and that she has a coarse and gross Complexion? She means by this sincere Confession to engage People to enter into the Particulars of her Beauty, and tell her of her Eyes which are large and sweet; if she were not well assur'd that her Charms would make amends for her Defects, she would not speak of them with so much Freedom.

'Tis a wrong Method to think of establishing a Reputation upon the Ruin of that of others. I have but an ill Opinion of the Virtue of a Woman, who rigorously condemns other Womens Conduct. The Affectation of those unmerciful Criticks, who interpret amiss every twinkling of the Eye upon every Gesture and Step that is made, is almost an infallible Sign that they do themselves all that they condemn. 'Tis a Symptom of a depraved Heart to suspect the most indifferent Action to be criminal.

How is it that *Symene* can't bear to hear another Woman spoken well of in her Presence? If one offers to commend the Virtue and good Conduct of any one, she flies out immediately, gives horrible Descriptions of them, and forges, *extempore*, a thousand imaginary Intrigues that they are not concern'd in. *Symene* seems to be very sorry there should still be
any

66 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

any virtuous and regular Woman in the World. *Symene*, and those of the same Stamp, should in Policy be silent, when that Subject is handled; the Wantonness of others does not excuse their ill Conduct, but they think to escape in the Crowd, and to find their Defence in the great Numbers.

Most Women take for Civility and good Breeding, what they do out of a too forward Complaisance, and which is only the Effect of a too easy Humour. If it be to please the Men, they relax so much, they are out in their Account. A stately Carriage is a surer Way to bring them to the Point they wish for, that retains them in their Duty and Respect before them; we must not, however, confound a spirited Reserve with an untractable and haughty Pride; the pretended Virtuous, affect sometimes to dazzle those that see not to the bottom of their Designs. There are Women who think to act the Stately, by affronting every body, and rebuffing those that caress them; this is not Stateliness but Extravagance.

Insensible Persons, who don't seem to be touch'd with the most obliging Things that are said to them, are very incommodious for Society, they would think themselves injured to depart one Moment from their Gravity; the pretendedly Modest commonly fall into this Fault; scarce will they venture to laugh, however diverting are the Things that are said to them; if they open their Mouths, 'tis to speak two or three Words in an affected and soften'd Tone; that pretended Shyness is but
little

Concerning Affectation. 67

little set by ; they would do better to be sociable and to laugh as others do, when the Subjects require it ; a genteel Gaiety, mixt with a little Gravity, is very charming to Society.

They that prepare and learn by Heart what they are to say in Conversation, seldom please ; Discourse must be rais'd occasionally, and Chance and Hazard must conduct it ; they who lay down the Plan of what they ought to say, give no Ear to others ; they are only watching for a Moment to bring in what they have learnt, and it seldom happens that they place it pertinently. When you have said a good Thing, don't repeat it, whether the Company heard or lost it. Set not up for a Wit if you would be esteem'd or courted, nor take upon you alone to find Laughter for the rest, and furnish Wit for the whole Company. It fares with the Beauty of the Mind, almost as with that of the Ladies, who never please less than when they affect to be handsome. This Lesson has been often repeated to *Clarina*, she is pretty and amiable, and she knows it too well ; whenever you tell her she is handsome, she bristles and pompously exposes her Charms, like a Peacock spreading his Tail ; she pleases less because she would over-please ; her Beauty has not all its Influence, because she affects too much to shew it.

A Mother who is already upon the Decline who believes herself to be handsome, and would be thought young, is very careful to put her Children out of the Way, the unquestionable Testimonies of her Age. The Affectation of appearing

68 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

appearing Young, in a Woman beginning to be in Years, draws only Contempt and Raillery from those who know her Infatuation, and exposes her Wrinkles and tarnish'd Complexion to Jest and Insults. 'Tis in vain for Women to think of pleasing by their Charms, when the Season of them is over; there's no imposing upon the Eyes, they are too penetrating Judges. Mothers of this Humour, abandon the Education of their Daughters to Strangers, who by this Remoteness, lose the Esteem and Affection which they owe them; but they gain by it another Way, by not being Witnesses of their Intrigues and Gallantry.

Lysione has four marriageable Daughters, which she suffers to grow stale Virgins, without thoughts of marrying them; she's so afraid of the Title of *Grand-mother*, that she immediately discourages all the Matches that are offer'd, without so much as entering into a Negotiation, be they never so advantageous; she never will think of a Portion for her Daughters, till she is necessitated to make her Will.

There are Mothers that are still less good-humour'd than *Lysione*; they force their Daughters, as in *France*, by affected Cruelties, to veil themselves in spight of their Inclinations; they deny them those little Set-offs, that young Maids are so affected with, and make them sensible they have no other Option than the Cloister, which they espouse with Diffraction, and lead a very miserable Life in.

A Woman, who for a long time has had the Reputation of Beauty, would at last distinguish herself by her Devotion, when she can be no longer handsome. It mortifies her to lose the Empire she obtain'd over Hearts, and she tries to establish another kind of Dominion over Minds. To succeed in this, she takes a quite opposite Conduct to what she has always used. Feasts, Walks, Companies, Plays and Dressing, took her by turns; she must now act another Part, and change her Batteries, when the Fire of Eyes is extinguish'd, and her Face is upon the Decay; she must have recourse to Singularities and Retirement, assume a mysterious Air, affect a Severity of Behaviour, utter Maxims of exalted Virtue, with a grave and compos'd Countenance, tho' the Heart be in the same Position as before; she changes the Object without changing the Inclination; when we pierce through her Hypocrisies, we find in her a secret and exceptionous Pride, the Quintessence of Jealousy, and all the other Passions that possess'd her when she was addicted to the World.

The *Romish* Votaries would not be so numerous, if they thought themselves oblig'd to Reformation, and to get rid of their evil Habits to merit the Reputation of *Devotees*; but it is much easier to lengthen their Sleeves and to bring Sacks full of Medals and Beads to the Church, than to grow humble and modest, complaisant and charitable. As long as we see these Votaries slandering all Mankind, more opinionated than other Women, more abound-
ing

70 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

ing in their own Sense, more forward in their Families, less complaisant to their Husbands, more delicate in all that relates to them; there's no great Reckoning to be made of their sophistical Devotion.

That which most discredits the *Devotees* is, that with all the Outsides and Appearances of Piety, they will in nothing be behind-hand with the Women of the World; they game, they enter into all the Assignations of Pleasure, they have the same Care of their Beauty, as the Coquets themselves; the Regards they have for their Persons proceed even to Delicacy; they can't bear a Word that has any Tendency to an Affront; and under Pretence of an affected Zeal, they censure the Conduct of all other Women, and lash them with unmerciful Calumnies, as if they were intrusted with the Charge of reforming all the City.

All Affectation is unbecoming, but it is criminal in matter of Devotion, and only belongs to those Cabal Votaries, whose whole Virtue consists in a starch'd and affected Outside.

The Reputation of a virtuous and regular Man, is extremely flattering to Self-Love, as giving an Ascendant over others; but there's Reason to fear, that a false Devotion usurps the Place of the true, and that the Mask is taken for the Reality. Men employ every thing to make their Fortune, and some are known to cover an extravagant Ambition under the Veil of Devotion, who stick not at the greatest Violences and Injustices, provided they

they can skreen their Reputation; these Abuses being a Reproach on true Devotion; and some there are so nice, as to refuse the Appellation of *Devout*, as a Scandal and Affront.

How fatiguing a thing is it to hear those People, who use select Words in their Discourse to express the most trivial Things? Is there any need of studying for a Periphrasis to call for Drink, or to ask what a Clock 'tis? What's the Reason, *Dorilas*, you affect always the use of new-coin'd Words, and will have nothing common with the People? Are you afraid you should not appear fantastical enough? These fashionable Words, wherewith you think to embellish your Discourse, give you an effeminate and ridiculous Air; you think you are applauded, when People ridicule and sneer you.

Persons of mean Birth procure nothing but Contempt by the Artifice they employ to conceal the Shame of their Original; they would be kindlier treated, if they ingenuously acknowledg'd what they are; nothing is more despicable than the Affectation they have to be eternally talking of the Employes of their Relations, and what noble Things they have done in former Ages; this often exposes them to very mortifying Reflections, for the World is not always in Humour to applaud so ridiculous a Vanity.

A Woman, who has a Fancy in her Head to counterfeit a Person of Quality, and, though she rise purely from the Vulgar and the Shop, dismisses every thing that's natural, and consequently

sequently all by which 'twas possible to please; her Ways, her Language, the Tone of her Voice, her Walk, is all fictitious; she is perpetually cavilling with others about their Quality, and their want of Consideration for her Person; she renounces all her Relations, whose mechanick Employments are invincible Testimonies of her Extraction. *Lyse* carries on the Extravagance so far, as to make her Husband pass for her Steward, before Women of Quality, who don't know him, and who ask why she keeps such an awkward Fellow about her?

'Tis a very common Temptation for the Citizens to desire to keep a Commerce with Retainers to the Court, to mingle in their Assignations, to copy them, and study their Language and their Ways; these sometimes happen to be very wretched Patterns, which must needs produce worse Transcripts; one Man's Air gruffer than another, can't chuse but have a bad Effect. *Fronto* is born in a plentiful Fortune, he has one of the chief Offices of the Long-robe, which gives him a great Elevation; he has also great Abilities to succeed in his Employ; but he scorns his Dignities and his Equals, and can endure nothing but little Folks; he swears and grows drunk like them, and will resemble them; this Affectation spoils his Merits, and makes him neither Magistrate nor Courtier, but a meer *Chimera*.

Persons of noble Blood are more easy, sociable and affected, than others rais'd from the Dunghil by their own Skill or Chance; that Air of Greatness they assume, prevents not
our

our discovering them through their borrow'd Outside. What means *Dorisa* by having her Train born up in her own House, as she passes from one Chamber to another? She'll have no Society but with Countess and Marchioness, for fear of keeping mean Company, and for the same Reason she sees none of her Relations.

'Tis an Affectation that denotes somewhat extremely finical, to use none but the most excellent Artists for the most indifferent Things. Offer nothing to *Salinda*, that comes not from the Shop of *la Frenaye*, *le Gras de Hauteville*, *le Doyen*, &c. Let the Pieces be never so admirable and well wrought, her Imagination is not satisfied, if they are not of the best Hand, and that which is most in vogue.

Wise People ought to submit themselves to the Humours of the Mode; it would be Affectation not to do what's done by all the World; a Singularity to make a Man observed. As extravagant as a Fashion seems, it must be follow'd when it is establish'd, provided we will not exceed the Folly of those that have invented it; what could we say of a Man that should still wear an High-crown'd Hat, and Breeches as wide as Petticoats.



Concerning foolish Vanity.

FOOLISH Vanity, as *Theophrastus's* Translator defines it, is a restless Desire to be esteem'd for little Things, or to seek a Name and Distinction in the most frivolous Subjects. A Man loves to be always talking of himself, he praises or blames himself, no matter which, provided he gain his End by it, which is to make himself esteem'd; he has the most advantageous Idea of his own Merit, but is but little affected with that of others. A vain Man loves to make Expences to be talk'd of, but those he makes are often foolish and mistaken, and gives him the Reputation of an Extravagant. Foolish Vanity ruins the right Use and good Husbandry of the natural Talents a man may have, and renders him as ridiculous for his good Qualities as for his Vices.

Vain People would fain be consider'd for every Thing they do and say; there's nothing but they retain to; the least Things seem considerable to them, when they believe they are of any Service to raise great Ideas of their Merit: We should pardon them, perhaps, this Refinement of Vanity, if they had any Indulgence for others, and were less attentive to
 spy

Concerning foolish Vanity. 75

spy all the Occasions of debasing them. Your Folly, *Plautius*, consists in esteeming only yourself, in being vastly contemptuous of all others, however estimable they appear.

We could have no way of comforting our selves, for the want of a thousand good Qualities we are conscious of, did we not believe them to be made up by other Talents, which we flatter ourselves to be Masters of; whatever Imperfections we find in us, we still have secret Complaisance in our Merit.

The Reason why Men are so unacquainted with themselves, is, that they always take their View on the most favourable Side. 'Tis impossible, indeed, not to perceive certain palpable Faults, which fly in their very Face, but they solace and flatter themselves, that their other good Qualities eclipse them, and that still prevents their Amendment, because they are not sufficiently touch'd with their Faults, and are contented to balance them by some good Qualities. *Alimene* has an ill Shape, and is too gross, and yet she thinks herself handsome enough, and, even that she excels the most regular Beauties by her fine Complexion, the Colour of her Hair, and the Sweetness of her Face. There's no Lawyer so decried at the Bar, but has secret Complaisances in Pleading, and frequently takes the Hisses for Applauses; that Infirmary is annexed to all the eminent Professions, and a Man must have excellent Parts, and make great Reflexions, not to be the Cully of his own Vanity.

76 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

No body ventures to say in general, that he's upon the Square with Men of great Merit, but when he enters into the Particulars of his good Qualities, he thinks he ought not to yield to any one. This Persuasion is of some Service, it makes every body content with himself, and if a Man has not the first Posts, he comforts himself because he thinks he deserves them.

People that are giddy with this Vanity, think we have never Deferences enough for them, and are not satisfy'd with the most respectful Devoirs; the least Formality that is wanting provokes their Spleen; they make Complaints of these little Negligences, as if all was at Stake, and we did them the greatest Injury in the World; but in Recompence, they easily dispense with the most essential Duties, and think that the least Regards they pay to others, are a full Discharge for all they owe them; a Bow not low or respectful enough, puts them out of Patience; these Punctilio's, these Trifles, they expect as indispensable Duties, and never pardon those who fail to pay them.

Those who seem so well satisfy'd with themselves, seldom content other People; to have every body's Approbation we must not easily persuade ourselves that we deserve it; there's nothing more shocking and ungrateful, than that high Esteem which some People appear possess'd with, for every thing that relates to them; they expect Applauses when they have said a silly thing; it seems that every thing must

must submit to the Sovereignty of their Decisions, and no one shall expect any favour from them; the way is not to applaud Fooleries, but at the same time not to with-hold our Esteem from that which deserves it. There's a Sort of Indignation rises in one's Mind, against those who think all good Sense is included in the Confines of their own Brain.

The Desire of making Parade of what one knows, and dazzling the World with a pompous Display of a fastuous Learning, is the Sign of a foolish Vanity. A Man of Sense speaks to People according to their Character, familiarizes and stoops to their Capacity; he will not appear more learned than those he talks to, and without making shew of a vain Science, he enters into the Genius of others, and make them find more Wit than they naturally have; that Discovery flatters them, and engages them to a Man so good humour'd and complaisant; they are much better pleas'd with him, than if he had charm'd them by his Learning.

The Learned would think themselves highly injur'd, if others should enter into the least Parallel with them; that lofty Idea of their own Sufficiency, destroys all their Regards and Complaisance for others, and the pedantick Ayre they discover in every thing they do, lessens the Esteem that would be paid to their Merit, if they were more obliging; but, by Misfortune, these so ingenious Men are commonly very Fools in the Commerce of the World; they know every thing that was done

E 3 by

78 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

by the Ancients, and know not how to live with the Moderns; as soon as they leave their Study, they seem to fall into another World, whose Ways and Language they are Strangers to; every Step they make exposes them to the Laughter of People of less Capacities.

They that would always shine, and be admir'd of others, seldom procure their Love, because we have a secret Spight to People that outshine us: The Way to insinuate into the Minds of Men, is to assist them as much as possible to display their Talents; they go away satisfy'd from us, when they are so with themselves. What does *Damis* pretend with his conceited Ayre, and ridiculous Pride, that Complacency he has for every thing he says, and Disgust for all that's said by others? Does he think to be courted for acting the finick and conceited? They that are so well pleas'd with themselves, seldom content others; to gain their Approbation, they must not easily fancy they deserve it, nor express too much eagerness thereupon: Persons so fond of Reputation, most commonly lose it by the Avarice wherewith they seek it; nothing throws them farther from their Mark, than their excessive Passion to arrive to it; there are few but sink a little in the good Opinion we had of them, when they shew themselves too often and too long together; for if we see their good Qualities, we discover also their Faults, which are a Kind of Counterpoise, and commonly bear down the Balance; we ought not at one View to make a Shew of all our Abilities and
Deserts,

Deserts, if we would keep People long in Admiration.

A Woman that thinks herself handsome, easily flatters herself that all that see her are touch'd with her Charms; she often applauds herself for an imaginary Triumph, and puts to her Account those Sighs of which she is altogether guiltless.

Plautia has a Conceit in her Head, that all Men which behold her, are presently in Love with her; she is fully satisfied of the Influence of her Charms, and believes it sufficient for her Conquests, only to be seen; this Persuasion inspires her with a foolish Vanity and Contempt for all her Sex, which she thinks she absolutely eclipses; others have not the same Thoughts of her, and no ways consider her as a dangerous Rival.

They that are born in Opulence and a great Fortune, if they have not abundance of Sense, are commonly defective in Civility: They are accusom'd to hear themselves flatter'd, and the Complaisance we have for them inspires them with an insupportable Pride, and a ridiculous Presumption: Nobody is bold enough to make them sensible how impertinent they are, but chuses rather to bear with them; they live without perceiving how they are hated, and die without the least Suspicion of the Ridicule they incurr'd by their foolish Vanity.

Argenes's Son was the civilest Person in the World, before his Father's Rise; his good-natur'd Complaisance and Civility made his Company generally desirable; since his Fa-

80 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

ther's coming to so much Wealth, there's a general Revolution in his Temper, he's grown haughty, uncivil, intractable; he despises all his Equals, and is no longer himself.

A Man of Sense can recover from a false Step he has made, or a foolish Thing he has said, whereas a Fool never retires, but makes it a Point of Honour to persist in his Error; this Constancy and mistaken Steadiness is the Origin of those extravagant Disputes, wherein a Man obstinately maintains ridiculous Propositions, because he will not own he has said an Impertinence, but 'tis a fresh Impertinence to defend it.

There are few People, but some time or other happen to say or do something that's extravagant; if they would honestly confess it, it would go half way towards their Apology; but the Haughtiness wherewith they will defend their Proceedings, tho' never so irrational, sets every Body against them; we compassionate the Infirmary of a Man who has committed a Fault, and blushes for it; but we fire against the foolish Vanity of him who recurs to pitiful Reasons to justify his Impertinences.

Who could forbear Laughing to see Persons opinionated with their Merit, proposing themselves as Patterns, and ridiculously fancying that all the World has the same Consideration for them? We easily observe by certain Passages, and studied Gestures, that they are very well satisfied with their supposed fine Qualities, and every body's tired with the Narrative of their great Perfections. I have an Estate,

Concerning foolish Vanity. 81

state, modestly, says *Lyfias*, I am of an illustrious Family, I have Wit and a Mein that prejudices People in my Favour; I would not change my Fortune with the happiest and most accomplish'd Man in the World. *Lyfias*, methinks, has something too much a foolish Conceitedness, which hinders him from knowing himself.

A Man of mean Parts is always content with himself, and that ill-grounded Complacency, is a sure Sign of the Mediocrity of his Wit: Having no Idea of what is excellent, his little Talents to him seem eminent Qualities, which prepossession, unless he be very careful, is a great Source of Impertinences. A good Wit, that is clear-sighted, is not satisfied with excellent Talents, because it still sees something that's above it. You see here what brings all Conditions to a Balance, and that those which have the greatest Share, are not always the most happy.

You believe the rest of the World have neither Wit, nor Merit, nor Talents, nor Ability; in recompence, you fancy in yourself whatever can be desir'd in a perfect and accomplish'd Man. This double Delusion proceeds from the same Principle; that Vanity which gives you such favourable Notions of your own Merit, and shuts your Eyes against your grossest Faults, gives you a scrupulous Attention to observe the least Imperfections of others. Persons that were never out of the Country they were born in, are much of this Character, they admire themselves, and have an extream Fond-

82 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

ness for their personal Merit, but pardon nothing in others.

A Man who has a weak Side, and some ill Quality he is mistrustful of, uses a thousand Subterfuges to conceal it; if he be meanly born, he is continually citing eminent Persons, which he says he is related to. He is applauded with a Sneer, and look'd upon as an Extravagant; this is all the Fruit of his Politicks.

They that come from *China* or *Japan*, may easily impose on us, but People of the same Province, or the same City, are known, and 'tis easy to discover the Quality of their Ancestors; if they abuse us for some time, by pretending a chimerical Pedigree, 'tis not long before we are undeceiv'd, and we laugh at their foolish Vanity and ridiculous Conceit.

Can People meanly born and educated, be ignorant of their Origin, and forget themselves so far, as to believe themselves Persons of Quality? 'Tis an Amusement to their Vanity, to entertain some credulous Fools with the Antiquity of their House, and how they are related to the first Families of the Kingdom. *Clarimont* talks of nothing but the Alliances of his Ancestors, which he deduces from the remotest Ages, tracing them backward to the first *Crusades*; his Father exercis'd a very vile Employ, and every one knows the Nature of the Occupation, by which he gain'd Money enough to buy a fine Post for *Clarimont*.

I can't comprehend the foolish Vanity of some People, who stile themselves noble, and of a
good

Concerning foolish Vanity. 83

good Family, before such as don't know them: How can they look them in the Face, to whom they have lyed in this manner, when they are better instructed concerning their true Pedigree? I have known People of the Country, when they came to Town, give it out every where, that they were Gentlemen; but they should have had the Precaution to have oblig'd their Countrymen not to reveal the Mystery. The Judicious have a vast Contempt for these vain Pretenders, but at last they find one or other silly enough to believe their imaginary Extraction, and that's their Comfort.

The Vanity to marry young Persons of Quality, has made abundance of young Women very ridiculous and miserable; they surrender themselves with all their Fortunes amass'd together, by the Industry and Thrift of their Friends, to a Man of the Sword, who marries them only for their Money, and to repair the Ruins of his Fortune. A Maid that has Riches, but no Birth, is ambitious to emerge out of the obscure Condition she is born in; the Counter and the Shop are prejudicial to her Vanity; she marries a Nobleman, who banishes her to some remote Part of the Country; she quits an House where she liv'd in Ease and Plenty, to inhabit an old Castle and tottering Walls.

Nobody pities *Clariana's* Misfortune, she has refus'd the most advantageous Matches of *Paris*, and the most eminent Persons of the Robe; nothing would serve her but a Colonel, who was in the way of arriving to the chiefest Posts.

84 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

Posts in the Army. Her Vanity drew her into great Misfortunes; her Husband was over-head in Debt before he married her; he has made expensive Campaigns in the Army, which have swallow'd up *Clariana's* Fortune; she is forc'd to live in a distant Province, where she wants Necessaries; and for an Amusement to her Vanity, she sometimes calls to mind that she is the Widow of a *Mareschal de Camp*.

We may fall into *Ridicule* by those very things in which we excel; a Man that sings or dances with a good Grace, who talks or writes politely, who has any rare Qualification, if he applauds his Merit, if he praises himself, and would have all the World admire him, will expose himself to Laughter and Contempt. We naturally do not like those who in any thing excel us; if we have any eminent Qualities which outshine others, we must make them amends for it by a great Modesty; without this, we shall infallibly displease them by those Qualities we display to merit their Esteem: This is the reason why an handsome Woman is seldom acceptable to another Woman who pretends to Beauty.

We see some People fondly hugging themselves, whose outside constitutes all their Merit; they adjust themselves with a good Air, they bow with a good Grace, and this suffices them, whilst they open not their Lips in Conversation for a while sitting; they are so persuaded that they please with their Looks, that they never take pains to speak.

Concerning foolish Vanity. 85

'Tis not always the sign of a true Courage to expose ourselves to Danger without Necessity; that vain, indiscreet, extravagant Rashness, which courts Danger for Danger's sake, has no other End than popular Applause; a Soldier who is not of a hectoring and huffing Valour has a staid and regular Bravery, which takes Fire at the sight of the Enemy; but he allows nothing to Hazard, where Prudence may conduct him. We commonly see such as procure their Deaths by their Cowardice; such as seek Danger because they have not the Courage to wait for it.

There are Men naturally ungrateful, not to be won by good Offices; a settl'd cross-grain'd Humour, renders them insensible of Benefits; we caress and court them, and watch all Opportunities to oblige them, yet they still remain cold and indifferent; this Ingratitude is commonly the effect of a secret Pride, being persuaded that all the Services we do them, are below what they deserve, they are not affected with all we do for them. Others of a mean and creeping Soul are extravagant in their acknowledgment for the least Trifles, and reckon to the Account of Obligations, the pure Justice that we do them. A Man ought not to be insensible to Benefits, but Gratitude has degrees as well as other Virtues, and he should not confound essential Services with meer Trifles, which are refus'd no body in the ordinary Commerce of Life: If Ingratitude be odious, an infinite Acknowledgment is troublesome; I had rather a Man should absolutely

lutely forget the good Offices I do him, than to be thanked for them on every Occasion.

'Tis an harder Task than is imagin'd, to relate an Action, tell a Story or a Piece of News well; to render the Thing more probable, and give it greater Weight, we commonly exaggerate it, which is a very wrong Course; these Aggravations are frequently a Sign of the Poverty of Sense in him that relates it, they are also the Character of a secret Pride; vain People seek always to make themselves admir'd by every thing they say, and every thing they do.

The too great Itch of talking and telling all one knows, is one of the Things which most exposes the Weakness of Men, and most troubles their Repose; there's no confiding in Persons of this Character, they would have it believed they are consulted, that they have the Ear of great Men, that they are intrusted with nice Secrets, that they have an hand in great Affairs; but their Vanity is not satisfied unless every body knows it; they often betray their best Friends without considering it, and draw unhappy Troubles upon themselves, by that foolish Vanity which renders them very despicable.

Be sure you say nothing to *Philo*, but what you would have known by all the World, and what you trust him with, recommend not under the Seal of Secrecy; that Circumstance is an infallible means to make him talk of it: It seems that the Secret you have committed to him is an insupportable Burthen; he must refresh

Concerning foolish Vanity. 87

refresh himself under it, and therefore, without considering the Character of those he talks to, or the Importance of the Business he talks of, he tells it to the first he meets.

'Tis rare to see People correct themselves of any Fault; the Reason is, they know not themselves, nor believe they are guilty of it: If they have still so much Modesty as not to speak it aloud, they speak it to themselves very low; if they confess some Imperfections in publick, they are such as it's no Disgrace to own. *Thraso* ingenuously confesses, that he is hasty and passionate; he would thereby insinuate, that he is brave, and abounds in Courage. *Chimene* says of herself, that she is the most unconcern'd and lazy Person in the World. Why does she not say, that she's an affected Finick?

If our bad Qualities made the same Impression upon ourselves that they do upon others, we should spare no Pains to conquer them. Self-love inspires us with great Indulgence for ourselves, and dwindles our gross Faults into almost nothing. *Lucia* is sensible enough that she is Lame, and yet she is continually talking of Women that are ill-shap'd, and makes such Jest upon them, as render them most ridiculous.

People would be much more taking, if they would be content to pass precisely for what they are, but they affect to appear with extraordinary Talents, to dazzle those they converse with. How many are there that become ridiculous through a whimsical Desire to be thought

88 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

thought Wits? The Affectation they discover, and great Value they have for their extraordinary Merit, gives them the Repute of Fops; they would be more esteem'd, and would have nothing to reproach them, could they confine themselves within their natural Bounds. A pretty Woman would be more amiable, if she did not set up for an accomplish'd Beauty.

They that pretend to undervalue their good Qualities, and lessen the Price of them, do it only to have them more nicely observ'd. *Glauria* whose Eyes are perfectly handsome, is complaining every Moment that they are too little. Every Body is convinc'd that *Geraflus* is a Wit; who can doubt of it after so many Works he has publish'd, and yet, he says, he does not aspire to the Glory of the sublime Genius's; but you make him mad, if you leave him in that Opinion, and don't prove to him the contrary.

I make no difference betwixt praising a Person for good Qualities he has not, and maliciously affronting him; the Reason why Men are so little disturb'd with these double-fac'd Railleries, is that they are all Cullies of Commendations; they think still that they deserve the greatest, and so far are they from Resentment, they thank you for this poison'd Incense. Be cautious of *Alps*, his Design is to impose upon you, or make you ridiculous; he has always some Mystery in the Praises he gives you; he makes use of fly Expressions, which artfully unveil some secret Faults, which he durst not openly reproach you with; these are mystical

Concerning foolish Vanity. 89

stical Civilities which Men of downright Sense take for sincere Praises, but which provoke the Laughter of those who enter into his Meaning, or are in Confederacy with him.

'Tis not always to do Justice to others Merit, that we give them excessive Praises, but with a By-design to be paid by them in the same Coin; those that we refuse this Tribute to, which their Pride demands, can't help shewing their Indignation. *Lyfmen* commends Ladies for their Beauty, contrary to the Custom of other Women; 'tis not precisely to do them Justice that she takes this Method, but to have all the Incense she gives return'd to her, to be flatter'd upon her Charms, and to be told every Moment that she is handsome.

What Contempt have we not for those who spend their whole Visit in the Commendation of themselves, who perpetually talk of their Family, their Fortune and their Interest? The Praises a Man inebriates himself with, have always an ill Effect, and if he had so much Command, as never to praise himself, he would be much more Praise-worthy, the Applauses he gives himself, fatigue all the World. Above all Things, a Man ought to avoid speaking too advantageously of his Quality, that's an antiquated Piece of Breeding. *Lyfis* would be very agreeable in Conversation, by his lively Wit, his diverting Behaviour, the delicate Turn he gives to all he says, but he's continually reducing the Discourse to his high Birth; he tells you, without Ceremony, that he is brave, and gives you the Particulars of
an

an Action, which he vigorously sustain'd; he crowns himself with his own Hands, and is his own Panegyrist.

'Tis a long time that Men have had Remonstrances made to them upon this Head, and have been told, that the Praises they give themselves, disgust and turn the Stomach of those that hear them, but they have taken their Ply, and will never be set right; the secret Pleasure they take in talking of themselves, prevails above all the Remonstrances you can make to them. If you commend any Man of the Sword before *Thrasylus*, he immediately falls to the telling you of an Affair wherein he was the principal Actor; he would thereby insinuate, that he is braver than the Person you boast of. If you talk of the Beauty of a Woman before *Clelia*, she tells you, without more ado, that she should be sorry not to be more handsome; this Sincerity is a Sign that she is fully persuaded of what she says. How ridiculous is it to praise one's self too grossly, and to propose one's self at every turn for an Example?

When once a Man's accusom'd to what's ridiculous, he is seldom, if ever, broke of it, because he does not perceive it; they are Faults he carries about with him, and never perceives that he has 'em; the older he grows, the stronger grows the Foppery. To preserve himself from it, he must watch his Conduct in little Things, as well as in great. 'Tis in Trifles a Man most shews himself, because he is apt to neglect them; he must, especially be upon his Guard against impositon'd Praises, which are rather

ther fly Satire, than true Encomium. We live in an ill-natur'd Age, in which every one affects to make a Jest of his Neighbour, and turn him into Ridicule. 'Tis often done under the neatest Appearances imaginable, and in the most flattering and caressing Language.

Every Man that is an Author, unless he be modest, and have a great Empire over himself, grows vain-glorious by his eagerness to shew himself and to read his Works; these Recitals are fatiguing and importunate; 'tis pure Vanity that makes a Writer very contemptible, and denotes an Heart corrupted with a foolish Glory. What occasion is there to teize People with Repetitions, which they hear only in Complaisance, and make Pretence of applauding, only to laugh at the Author and his Piece.

A Man conceited of his Merit, and charm'd with the Agreeableness of his Work, desires you modestly to censure it, and to tell him freely your Opinion, without Favour or Affection; but at the very first Word you would have him strike out, he begins to fire, and looks upon you with a sneering Smile, which sufficiently implies, that he pities you and your Criticism: If you persist in telling him your Thoughts, he accuses you of Ignorance and Injudiciousness, he leaves you discontented with your Advice, and goes in quest of some more easy Bubble to flatter his foolish Vanity.

You would have the World talk of you, *Philidor*, at any rate, but all you do to make a Figure, serves but to render you ridiculous; Vainglory is the Rock that all your good Qualities

92 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

lities split upon ; that grand Equipage that encumbers the Streets, and makes you pass for an Ambassador, is the thing which makes you look'd upon as a Fop ; it seems as if you had confin'd your Merit, to the having a great Number of Horses and Slaves.

Seliniac borrows Money on all Hands, that he may live high, and be drawn in a Coach and Six, but his Creditors are stern and terrible People, and don't understand Raillery ; they are continually at *Seliniac's* Heels, who is forc'd to go on Foot, for fear they should seize his Coach.

He that could forbear talking and praising of himself, would find that he seeks, that is, to be esteem'd ; I know that vain People take an exquisite Pleasure in vaunting what they do, but they ought also to have Regard for the Pleasure of others, who suffer by hearing them : Leave the publick the Liberty of its Suffrage, to whom it belongs to determine the Glory you deserve.

'Tis easy to observe, from *Gelanor's* Discourse and Carriage, that he is well satisfied with himself ; he finds the Art always to reduce the Discourse to something that relates to him ; he boasts his Retinue, his Expences, his Quality ; he talks of his Employ, and the Favour of his Prince ; he tells you without Reserve, that he has Sense, and is handsome ; and he so fully believes it, that he'll persuade others of it, one time or other.

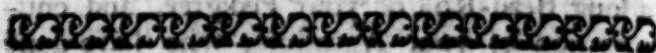
You always talk of yourself, *Philotimus*, and of your Wife and Children ; after you have

Concerning foolish Vanity. 93

have exhausted the Chapter of your Birth, by a long Bead-Roll of your Pedigree, and enumeration of your Ancestors, who have done important Services to the State; you talk of the vast Riches you possess, the great Rate you live at, the Place you have a mind to buy, and an Estate in the Country. Do you think that the Publick is much interest'd in your History? There are Seasons wherein you chuse to speak ill of yourself, rather than nothing; this is not with Design to be believ'd, but only to talk of your self; the Pleasure you take in it indemnifies your Self-Love, but you ought to indemnify others for the Uneasiness you give them.

The Prepossession of Men concerning their Reputation, is a great Weakness, and has a quite contrary Effect to what they desire; it exposes them to *Contempt* and *Ridicule*. Those splenetick Niceties they have upon the Point of Honour, don't render them more deserving of it: What Engines don't they play to depress others, and raise themselves upon their Ruin? That sordid Jealousy, and ill-natur'd Envy, is a sign but of an indifferent Merit.

Of

*Of the bad Taste.*

TIS a kind of Maxim which every body takes up without Examination, that Tastes are not to be disputed; mean while, there's nothing more certain, than that there is a good and bad Taste, and it would be a good Service to the World to make it sensible of this Difference. He that of all Men has penetrated farthest into the Folds of an human Heart, has said, there is in the Works of Art a Point of Perfection, as of Goodness or Maturity in the Products of Nature; he that don't perceive it, or places his Esteem below or above it, has a deficient Taste, and therefore 'tis not without Reason that Tastes are controverted and disputed; but it would be a sort of Miracle to rectify those who have a corrupt Palate, because of the natural Repugnance incident to all Men, to own their want of Judgment; for no body will honestly confess that he is mistaken, or that his Taste is naught. On this Principle it is that we find Men so obstinate to maintain the Propositions they advance, be they never so extravagant; this Obstinacy manifests the little Judgment of those who reason so extravagantly.

Judgment is one of the rarest Things in the World, and yet every one pretends to judge, with-

without fear of discovering their Blind-side and perverse Taste; they would fain, right or wrong, draw all Men to their Opinion, and run away with the Suffrages, however whimsically they judge of Things, either by Censure or Approbation. How pitiable is that Haughtiness some People shew upon our reading any Piece to them? Or as they come from the Play-house, they applaud whatever is Naught, and unmercifully condemn all that is Excellent; they maim some Terms of Art, which they preposterously place; all they do to be look'd upon as nice Judges, serves only to make them act the *Fool turn'd Critick*.

There are very few to be met with, who understand true Merit, but take the Shadow for the Substance, and glaring Tinsel for good Gold; they let their Eyes be dazzled by a superficial Lustre, which pleases only the injudicious, inasmuch, that a Man need not despair of having Applauders, though he have no true Desert. A Man may even, sometimes, venture upon Ambiguities, that may be interpreted well or ill; the Judicious can't be deceiv'd by them, but there are abundance of Coxcombs.

Why should a Man torture himself to please an Herd of Fools, whose Judgments are always wrong? Is it not better to have the Approbation of five or six worthy Men, who distinguish true Merit, than by false Beauties allure the Voices of the Multitude? What does it signify if you are not approv'd by People of bad Sense? Is it any wonder if Beasts
are

are mistaken, or reason ill? Rest satisfied with doing well, without being alarm'd at the false Judgments of the Publick.

There are in the World a sort of insipid Flatterers, who make it their Business to praise every Body, without distinction of true Merit, they make a thousand Exclamations for the least Trifle, and load you with Praises, without Reason or Distinction. This Vice is in mighty Vogue, we dare not speak to People without flattering them, and saying a thousand things we don't believe; 'tis a kind of Farce that is continually acted, which soever way we turn, we are murder'd by these trivial Panegyrist; there is nothing more absurd and ridiculous than this Character, for, unless we take care, we become as impertinent by praising others, as ourselves.

How many are there that by a ridiculous Vanity, still defend those silly Things that are exploded by good Sense? 'Tis as hard to recommend bad Things, which are generally condemn'd, as 'tis to depreciate those things that have an universal Approbation. Ill Judges make it their Glory to resist the Torrent; if they were ask'd the Reason why they damn'd some Pieces, and would sincerely answer, they could give no other, but because all the World approves them. You censure the best Places in a Book, which all sensible Men applaud, and you equally blame those that do well and those that do ill; you laugh at a Man of Merit as a Fool; this must proceed for want of Equity or Judgment, take your Choice.

As

As extravagant as a Man is in his Fancies, he proposes them as Models, and would have Admirers. *Frontin* has built an House of an unusual Contrivance, he is charm'd with his Design, and if you would believe him, all Houses were to be pull'd down to be rebuilt upon this Plan. The Judgment is the Triumph of Self-Love, they that have it Just and Excellent, become famous by their Inventions, even tho' they invent but Trifles.

That which makes Women talk so much, is their want of Understanding; this Maxim seems a Paradox, and yet 'tis very true; as they are very shallow and empty, whatever strikes their Senses takes up their Capacities, and becomes the Subject of their Discourse; whatever they see or hear, their Pleasures and Pains, their Domestick Affairs, their Intrigues, their Quarrels, are inexhaustible Topicks, and provided you only talk fiddle faddle, they are never at a loss in Conversation.

We find Women of so depraved a Taste, that nothing will serve them unless they be talk'd of, be it good or ill, 'tis indifferent to them, provided they be the Subject of Discourse, there being nothing so calamitous in their Opinion, as to be forgotten; they take a good Course for that, and commit so many Extravagancies that 'tis impossible the Publick should not mind them.

The Lady *Orsay* is so solicitous, lest any body should be ignorant of her Adventures, that she is at all the Pains to recount them herself, to all that will give her the hearing; she

F

even

98 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

even makes Additions and Episodes of her own to embellish the Romance; she tells the Names of her Lovers, draws their Pictures, and omits no Circumstance. Can it be doubted, after this, whether she be beautiful and charming, when she has a whole Legion of Gallants?

Heretofore the Men were less reserv'd and cautious than the Women; the Mode is turn'd about, and the latter are now the more foolish and extravagant, they are more regardless of Measures, and at less Pains to save Appearances; there are some Women of so fantastick a Character, that they could find no Relish in any thing they did, if all the World was not inform'd of their Adventures; they make themselves suspected of more Ill than they are actually guilty of in their Practice; they delight in Noise and Bustle, and resolve to be taken notice of, tho' it be for their Vices.

Could it be believ'd, unless we saw it with our Eyes, that Women eminent for their Quality and their Birth, plum'd themselves upon their Gallantries, and establish'd their Merit upon the Number and Reputation of their Lovers? So far are they from making a Secret of these kind of Affairs, that they talk of them with the same Freedom as if they were things indifferent; we see them in the Mall and in the Park, walking, giggling with their Sparks; they resort together to the Plays and Gaming-Houses, and are never apart. Would not such a publick and avow'd Fondness make any Woman blush, that had the least Sense of Honour,

or

or any Remains of Reason? 'Tis an astonishing Thing, they have the Face thus to appear in Publick; the Corruption of the Age, and the specious Names that are given this sort of Commerce, don't mitigate the Infamy; if they were call'd by the Name they deserve, they would be an Horror to themselves.

Whatever Merit a worthy Man may have, it can't defend him against the silly Raileries of Buffoons; Fools applaud them for it, but none but Fools. Men of Worth, who judge not by Prepossession, do him Justice, and pity those that pretend to turn him into Ridicule.

It is usual enough for a Fool that is in Favour, or is Rich, to despise a Man of Merit without Fortune; but all the Fooleries that escape him, when he goes to jest, make the sensible Man amends before the Company, who prefer personal Merit before the Wealth of a Banker, if they judge rationally of things. 'Tis not so much the Riches of some People that makes them hated, as the foolish Vanity that possesses them, and the haughty Way wherewith they treat others not so wealthy as themselves. I can't conceive, says *ClarINETTE*, very often, how any one can live, without at least three thousand Pounds a Year. It is not ten Years ago that *ClarINETTE* had not wherewithal to buy her a Petticoat, and she went abroad to dine with her Neighbours to save Charges.

A Man of Reserve, that talks but little, gives no handle to the Drolls, who know not

100 *Reflections upon* Ridicule.

where to attack him, but it's easy to expose the Folly of those Blunderbusses, that talk loud and long, that decide impertinently, that condemn the good things in a Book, and approve the bad, without Discretion and without Rule.

Don't venture to speak your Opinion, unless you be sure of your Matter; thereby you give an infallible Proof, whether your Sense be just or otherwise; that Rashness, which most People manifest to speak their Thoughts too freely upon all sorts of Subjects, is a certain *Criterion* of little Judgment; these odd Decisions expose their bad Taste, and often are the Consequences of a foolish Pride.

Profess'd Banterers chuse rather to disoblige their best Friends, than to lose the Opportunity of speaking their Jest; they don't reflect that in making others laugh they make themselves ridiculous. What Parts, what Address, what Genius, what Acquaintance with Manners, must not a Man have that will set up for an Humorist? 'Tis not a small thing to please Men of Judgment; in making them laugh, we make ourselves despis'd; he that thinks to be agreeable, and to divert the Company by his Wit, cheapens himself by his flat and foolish Drollery.

Abundance of People think to distinguish themselves by humourous Singularities, which raise most disadvantageous Notions of them; you are not at the bottom so much a Libertine as you appear; if you would regard Externals and save Appearances, you'd pass for an honest

honest Man. What Pleasure do you find to vilify yourself for a Frolick? Is the Reputation of an honest, wise and sober Man so trifling a thing, that you'll risque it for a Jest, and a little dull Raillery upon Subjects which ought not to be touch'd but with great Reserve? We judge of Men by their outward Appearance, and we have Reason to believe their Sentiments are such as they affect to have them thought.

A Wit, who thinks himself so, and would be thought so of others, is the plague of Society. Who can hold in, against the Applauses he gives himself, against the Contempt he has for all that others praise, and that deserve most to be prais'd? He always puts his best Side outermost, all his Words, and Gestures, and Twinklins of his Eyes, signify that he is a Wit, that he is persuaded of it, and would have others persuaded of it too: Your Design, *Dorilas*, was to set up for a Wit, you have succeeded in it, but this Title has undone the little Merit you had before. The Character of a Wit includes in it I know not what Haughtiness, Presumption, Folly, and a vast Magazine of Contempt for poor Mankind, which is respected with an Eye of Pity and Self-Complacency in abundance.

'Tis a wretched thing not to have sufficient Wit to perceive when one talks like a Fool; but they that obstinately maintain all their Extravagancies are still more to be pitied, because they are incorrigible.

What a Fatigue is it for a Man of Sense to hear those Babblers, that talk a long time together and say nothing. Women of Parts talk much, and in handsome Terms; if they could avoid Impertinences their Conversation would be very charming; in telling a Story, they omit not the least Circumstance; if they talk of an Affair, they sift it to the minutest Particulars, and when they have said all, they add some Episodes, which give them a fine Career.

There's a *medium* to be observ'd betwixt that Itch of imparting Secrets, and a scrupulous Reserve that dares not talk of the least Trifles. *Damon* sometimes makes a Mystery of Things which every body knows; he desires you to keep the News secret which he tells you, which you may read as well as he in the Gazette.

It was the Saying of a Philosopher, *Speak, that I may know you*; if this be a certain Maxim, most Ladies make it too apparent what their Notions are concerning Gallantry; they are not reserv'd enough upon that Head, they talk too freely of Intrigues, Amours, Adventures, gallanting Stories, kind Mistresses; these Discourses disgrace them more than they imagine; 'tis a Sign they are a little too gentle, when they don't start at these sort of Affairs; there's no occasion to appear so knowing upon these Subjects, a laudable Ignorance would do them much more Honour.

'Tis a sign of Wit to be able to proportion one's self to all sorts of Characters, to rise or fall,

fall, according as occasion offers; nothing ought to be above or below the Notice of a Man of great Sense; he is capable of the most exalted things, and he must descend to the least Particulars. We know some People who are most admirable Authors, and yet seem weak in the Affairs of Interest; every body cheats them, and their Servants rob them, because they will not stoop to little things, which they ought to be exactly acquainted with.

Agatho in the Visits he makes the Sex, talks to them a thousand learned Things, even to the citing Passages of *Greek*; we ought to proportion what we say to the Genius and Abilities of those we speak to, since we speak only to be understood. 'Tis easy enough to impose upon the credulous or the ignorant, and to thun them with bombast Words.

Since *Turpin* has had the Fancy to act the Learned, he's grown intolerable, he undertakes to determine of every thing, and his Determinations are always wrong; he gapes in the Theatre, and makes wry Faces at the Players; the most excellent Pieces of Prose and Verse, to him seem but indifferent: But he declares himself the Patron of those that every body hisses; and you engage in a personal Quarrel with him, if you pretend to maintain that they are naught; his Decisions are an Air of Haughtiness and Presumption that there's no withstanding: *Turpin* would be a much worthier Man, if he did not think himself Learned.

104 *Reflections upon* Ridicule.

Little Souls, as Women, the vulgar Maids that live retir'd, Country People, are not affected with things they easily comprehend; they are more touch'd with what they don't understand, as believing there's something of Mystery in that which is above their Comprehension; they that preach to the Nunneries, seldom charm them by rational and intelligible Discourses, and full of Sense; nothing will do with them, but the sublime, false Rhetorick and Hyperbole.

There are few whose Judgment is good enough to defend them against the Charms of Novelty; hence proceed those ill-grounded Applauses, for Works which have no other Merit than that of being New; the Faults of them agreeably surprize us, and that Surprize lessens our Attention; the best things in Nature weary and fatigue us by a too long Custom; that which struck us most, leaves an Habit in us, which renders it flat and dull; the livelier a Passion has been, the greater Disgust it leaves, when once it's cur'd. However, an exquisite Judgment will never be disgusted with that which ought to please, nor ever applaud what deserves not to be applauded.

I have known People complain, that some Persons had too airy an Humour; they that are always laughing, don't always make others merry; too much Gaiety tires at last, and grows insipid; there are some that can't speak the least thing without cackling, and likewise highly applaud whatever's said to them. 'Tis
fre-

frequently a sign of Stupidity and want of Sense, to admire what is not admirable; great Wits are never great Admirers.

Weak and irresolute Minds are always affecting to do what they see done by others; incapable of any Resolution of their own, they are govern'd by the Examples that are before them, and without executing any thing of their Projects, they are always agitated with infinite Reflections, which destroy one another.

'Tis a Mistake to believe there is Greatness of Soul, and Courage in hating all the People that have done us ill Offices; that Passion is a sign of Weakness; they that have not Generosity to pardon, nor Courage to revenge themselves on those they hate, never forgive at all.

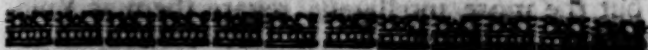
It requires Merit and excellent Qualities, not to run into fantastick Fopperies, when a Man is arriv'd to a great Fortune; the Head turns and grows vertiginous, upon so great an Exaltation; but good Fortune is a Veil that hides the Folly; the Extravagancies of a Man in Favour are not look'd upon as such; that which appears monstrous in a Man disgrac'd, is tolerated and sometimes applauded in a Man in Place. *Rosimon's* Lips never open but to utter childish Follies; he insolently boasts his Favour, his Credit and his Station; every body applauds him, and bends their Knee before this Idol; many are even persuaded that *Rosimon* has great Desert, because

cause he has a great Estate, and is capable of doing a great deal of Good or Mischief.

How many People recommend themselves by their Garb and Equipage? Have they any other Merit than that of being follow'd by a numerous Train, and dragging every where after their Heels a magnificent Retinue? The World is silly enough to value them the more for this; an embroider'd Coat gives Admittance into Places to a Man that would be thrust out, if he was worse cloath'd. Merit is not engraven upon the Forehead; a Fool with a glittering outside, tramples upon a Wit, who has no other Portion than that of his own Parts; a Man must be a Sot to value himself for the richness of the Habit he wears, but he must have a bad Taste, that suffers himself to be dazled by an imaginary Merit, which a Man divests himself of when he undresses. *Damon* complains that he was ill receiv'd at the Marchioness of *Araminta's*, who shew'd great Regards to *Thrasimon*, who is only a sumptuous Fool, whose Equipage is an Honour to the Gates he stops at. *Damon* is to blame, not to be Rich, and to go on Foot.

That which shews, more than any thing, the bad Taste of our Age, and the Depravation of our Morals, is the Deference we have for Varlets, who have emerg'd from the Obscurity of their Condition by their Wits; the City and Court honours them, the Wretches who wore a Livery are Company for the greatest Lords, they are Partners in their Pleasures

and Companions at Play; they entertain Dukes and Peers, who think it no Disgrace to level themselves with a Man that wore their Livery; this Confusion makes us look'd upon with Astonishment, by Nations far remote from our Climate, which we call Barbarous.



Of Imposture.

IS it possible there should be no Sincerity in the World, and that we dare not confide in any body? Those very Persons that flatter you to your Face, caress and kiss you; as soon as they have left you, or your Back is turn'd, let fly a thousand Calumnies upon your Conduct; this is an infamous Procedure, we are to mistrust artificial Words with a double Meaning, as the most pernicious thing in Nature; such fly and elaborate ways of acting intimate a great Proneness to Deceit, and a great Genius for Imposture.

Most Men are only ingenious Cheats, they study to deceive all the World by fair Appearances and flattering Words, which are so many Flowers they strew to cover the Snare they have laid for you.

We ought never to promise any thing above our Power, nor engage in chimerical Undertakings,

108 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

takings, which is the common Fault of vain People, who would impose upon those that don't know them: Who would not think, that heard them, that they govern'd the whole Kingdom? They stun and deafen you with the continual Noise of their Favour and Interest; you would imagine the Prince had great Consideration for them, and that he durst refuse them nothing. Some are easy to believe them, but the more intelligent regard them as Visionaries, or as Cheats.

We commonly deviate from the Rules of good Conduct, when we would be over-cunning; Artifice, Craft and Diffimulation, usurp the Place of Capacity and good Sense, and the more considerable Faults we commit, the more we depart from the common Road; that is, we become the Fools of our own Farce.

A Dissembler makes the first Advances, and by that Artifice imposes on others, who can't suspect a Man that smiles in their Face and talks to them, can have any secret Poison in his Heart; he speaks in submissive and respectful Terms to pacify those that justly complain of the Injuries they have receiv'd from him; but his Design is to give them an Opiate that he may the more effectually deceive them.

Noble Souls are easily caught in this Snare, being above Tricking themselves, they can't imagine others should have recourse to Artifice to seduce them, whereby they easily become the Property of abundance of People who employ all their Subtilty to deceive such as don't suspect them.

Sin-

Sincerity is the Soul of Commerce and civil Society, and yet 'tis a very uncommon Virtue in so refining an Age as this we live in; 'tis an Art and a Trade to disguise the Sentiments; that pretended Openness of Heart, is only a Lure to attract the Confidences of Men; we find none sincere, but those that have not Wit enough to play the Impostor.

To what Purpose is it to make insignificant Promises, without Design or Ability to perform them? You accost *Lysander* with an humble and submissive Air, you open your Business to him, and conjure him to assist you; he readily engages, and with the Assurance he speaks to you, you believe he will assist you to the utmost; but as soon as he leaves you, he forgets your Name, and the Nature of the Business you have solicited with him, and will never think on't more. Nevertheless he is always surrounded and respected by a Crowd of Clients, whom he has long abus'd with the Offers of his Credit and his Friendship. 'Tis as hard for a Man to work off an Imposture, as 'tis to be convinc'd of the Infidelity of a Mistress.

The Necessities we are under, and the Hopes we have to be assisted by those who promise us their Succour, jointly conspire to devote us to them; though they have deceiv'd us a thousand times, we continue to pay our Court to them. People in Place should be more reserv'd in promising their Favour, and making their Dependants languish with the Diet of chimerical Hopes and delusive Promises; all they
gain

gain by this Conduct, is to make themselves despis'd, and to be regarded as Affronters.

I can't comprehend the Hardiness of some People to be the Author of Lies; that Vice is so sordid and dishonourable, that there needs nothing more to ruin a Reputation, whatever Merit a Man may have besides. 'Tis in vain to lay in Precautions to maintain a Lye; Truth discovers itself, sooner or later, whether he will or not; the best contriv'd Impostures fall to pieces in some Part or other that was not foreseen. *Falvia* is the prettiest Person imaginable, and has the most diverting way with her, but she is so addicted to lying, that she can't speak the least thing without some additional Falshood, and therefore no Credit is given to any thing she says; the most certain Truths become Fables when she speaks them.

You would think, if you heard *Celamon* discourse amongst those that don't know him, that he has travell'd all over *Europe*; he relates with a surprizing Impudence, what he has seen at *Rome, Venice, Vienna, Paris, Madrid*; they that know that he was never out of the Country, can't sufficiently admire his Face of Brags: He has collected out of *Moreri's* Dictionary, the most considerable Passages relating to each City, and has got the principal Circumstances by Heart, which he vents by a prodigious Impudence before Fools, who gape and hold their Breaths to hear him, so enchanted are they with his Story; but if any Man of Learning happens to drop in, who by unexpected Questions throws the

the Historian out of his *Moreri*, there's an end of his Babble, and he discovers his Ignorance and Impostures.

We find in all Conversation, People of a frivolous, lazy and supine Character, without Application or Attention, who are not so much as sure of their own Notions, but give their *aye* and *no* at once upon the same Question; be sure not to depend upon any thing they say, they'll promise the very same thing to your Enemy in the same Affair, but will keep their Word neither with the one nor the other; they will not so much as think they have promis'd any thing the next Moment, or that any one has spoke to them.

Most People take less Pains to cure their Passions than to disguise them; a Knave that knows himself, and would pass for an honest Man, conceals himself under the Veil of Hypocrisy, but to little Purpose, for his Vices, in spite of him, break through the Darkness that surrounds them; yet he thinks he bubbles the World, which prejudices, comforts and encourages him; it would put him besides himself to know that all his Artifices were seen thro', and all his Subtleties to disguise himself discover'd; but no body lets him know it, he flatters himself that his Designs are unobserv'd, and this Security emboldens him to proceed in the same Practices.

Who can doubt but that religious Hypocrites are fully persuaded of the Ridicule they incur by acting the Part they do, since they use so many Artifices to disguise themselves, and impose up-
on

112 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

on the World? Their Life is one perpetual Comedy, and they seem always upon the Stage; they hardly ever pull off the Mask; their Vices don't at all discourage them, provided they are cover'd with a specious Appearance. You deceive yourself, *Alidor*, if you still think to abuse the Publick; believe it you are known, your Grimaces have for some time misled some credulous Creatures, but they are undeceiv'd; your Business was to obtain the Preferment you are plac'd in; now you have it, you need not counterfeit any longer; we excuse from that Ceremony, which still costs you Pains: At present act another part; now you have made your Fortune, 'tis time to grow devout in earnest.

Every body boasts of their Sincerity, because every body is conscious that Sincerity is the Sign of a noble Soul. Without this Virtue Society is only a School of Imposture; Tom-doubles are to be avoided as Enemies that would betray you. How many are there that abuse their Ingenuity and Ascendant over others, to seduce them into all the Nets they spread for them, to decoy them with more Certainty and Address? They put on the Mask of Sincerity, they affect an easy, natural and undefigning Air. That concerted Sincerity is a subtle and delicate Deception, which leads People where they would have them, and betrays them without perceiving it.

He that is jealous of his Reputation, inviolably keeps his Word, be the Subject never so light and trifling; nay, there's more need to be

be exact and circumspect in little things and of no Consequence, because it's easier to neglect them. 'Tis a most scandalous Vice to amuse People with fair Promises, when a Man has neither Ability nor Inclination to accomplish them.

There's no Difficulty how we are to deal with a Man who declares against us, or hates us openly; but we easily become the Property of a fictitious and dissembling Friend, who acts by Treachery and Disguise. People of this Character are very dangerous in civil Life; it would be the honest way to let others know that we are none of their Friends; and that they ought not to depend upon us, or expect any Favours, than to amuse them by the shew of an hypocritical Friendship; for at least they would know what they are to trust to.

There's nothing commoner in the Commerce of the World, than to meet with such as pretend to approve your Conduct, but unmercifully condemn it amongst your Censurers. They even expose those Faults which no body else is so well acquainted with, by reason of the Intimacy you have had with them. 'Tis an abominable Treachery, a Practice unbefitting a Man of Honour and a Woman of Virtue.

What Nonsense 'tis to make fair Pretences to those we neither love nor esteem. 'Tis a mean-spirited thing to curry Favour when we see them, and to fly out against them as soon as their Back is turn'd. You see a Wo-
man

114 *Reflections upon* Ridicule.

man infinitely carefs'd who comes into any publick Meeting, she is celebrated for her Beauty, her Carriage, her Charms, her Dress, and the good Air she puts on, not one thing is forgotten; as soon as she is gone, she is treated as a ridiculous Creature, that has neither Sense nor Agreements; but does every thing in an awkward way. Either forbear your excessive Praises to her Face, or spare her when she has left the Company.

An Author that comes and reads his Manuscript; they that consult you about any Business, or enquire of you what the World says of their Conduct, don't always do this with a Design to be corrected, but to be flatter'd and applauded. It requires a vast Sincerity; when we know their Intentions, to talk freely to them upon so nice a Subject, and let them see the Folly of their Conceitedness: In the mean time 'tis a cruel Complaisance to foster them in their foolish Vanity, by the false Praises you amuse them with. However, 'tis the Practice of the World, and there's little Hope left of abolishing such an establish'd Custom; we should become the Scarecrow of all Companies, should we shew all People the Glass, who desire us to admonish them of their Faults.

'Tis an infamous Proceeding, to exasperate those who are already provok'd against one another by ill Reports; they are deceiv'd, who think hereby to procure their Intimacy and Friendship; instead of which, they make themselves despis'd. There's something extremely

treably cowardly and mean in the Breast of a Man, that to make himself Friends, can resolve to ruin others by misrepresented Discourses. Indeed this is often done without any ill Intention, or desire of doing Mischief, for want of due Consideration, what ought to be said or omitted before some People: but that Inapplication and Negligence is very blameable. A Word accidentally dropt, has often very ill Consequents, and we see People ready to sacrifice one another for an indiscreet Expression.

Men are most commonly unjust upon the Chapter of Women, very many of them are virtuous, and regular, and unrepachable; but because some of them have plaid them a Trick, they are mistrustful of all the rest. This is an unreasonable Conclusion; if some of them are Wantons, their Wantonness ought not to injure the Reputation of Modest Women; we ought to be very reserv'd in passing Sentence upon this Subject, and those malicious Satires are in no wise to be approv'd, which accuse all Women in general. It would be an equal Weakness to praise them all without Distinction; we sometimes see such of them as are grand Comedians in Point of Prudence, they have a great Reputation for Sobriety, but don't deserve it; others go for Coquets, but are not so: Appearances, which they don't sufficiently take care of, are all that's criminal in their Conduct.

The Reason why we see so few eminent for their good Qualities, is that they are more industrious

116 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

dustrious to disguise their Vices than to reform them; they don't take the Pains to be honest Men but only to appear so. Artifices and Disguises serve instead of real Virtues, and they that are most dextrous at deceiving, pass for Men of greatest Merit, tho' at Bottom they have no Principles of Probity.

The Reputation that is not founded upon a true Virtue, is but of a short Duration: A Man may blind the World by an artful Conduct and well-manag'd Affectations; but that Esteem quickly vanishes, the Artifice betrays itself, and unforeseen Accidents take off the Vizard. A false Valour never stands its Ground, when the Danger is real; a counterfeit Virtue will not carry a Man far, because 'tis very difficult always to act a Part, and he's at last weary of employing Artifices necessary to impose upon the World; he neglects outward Appearances when he thinks his Affairs are safe, and takes Liberties he denied himself before. Habit frequently prevails over all Precautions; a Surprise that throws him off his Guard, the Curiosity of a Servant, an unexpected Visit, an Action that had not been concerted, and Time which draws *Truth from the Bottom of the Well*, all on a sudden, and when he least thinks on't, exposes to open Day the Designs he thought wrapt up in impenetrable Night and Obscurity.

Thus it is that some People, after they have long impos'd on the Publick, by the specious Appearances of an affected Honesty, fall at last into Disgrace; their Confidants betray them,

them, those whom they had engag'd in their Interests, and silenc'd by great Promises, which they never perform'd, reveal this Mystery of Iniquity, and expose the Shame of these Impostors to the Eyes of all the World.

The Appearance and Shadow of Virtue, have sometimes the same Effect, as to Reputation, as the Substance itself. How many Women pass for Vestals, because they wear the Livery of Modesty, and perfectly act their Parts? The worst of it is, that in the Characters they represent whilst they cheat the Publick, they can't deceive themselves; whilst they receive high Encomiums of their false Virtue, their Conscience gives them smarting Reproaches, and makes them sensible of their ridiculous Hypocrisy. 'Tis good Comedy for those that know them, to hear them extolling Modesty with such an Emphasis, and boldly lifting themselves amongst the Virtuous, tho' they are nothing less than what they affect to appear: 'Tis true, some are over-reach'd by them, because they will not be at the Pains to unveil their Mysteries, but rather believe them upon their Word.

The brave Maxims of Virtue which flow from the grave Women, are only an Artifice to amuse themselves upon the Loss of the Pleasures they regret, and to decry the Conduct of those who are still in a Capacity to enjoy them; vex'd to be no longer the Objects of the Addresses and Applications of Admirers, they endeavour to find a Compensation for their antiquated Beauty, in their forc'd Modesty, and In-

118 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

Invectives against all the pretty Women: They seek for Consolations, to support them in their new Way of Life, which they are forc'd politically to espouse, but which they never dreamt on, whilst they had the Crowd about them, and all the Beaus at their Feet: But now, that the Fire of their Eyes is extinguish'd, and their Glass tells them it's Time to think of a Retreat; to compensate for the Loss of prohibited Pleasures, they fall foul upon those who continue in the Scenes, and begin to act the Part they themselves play'd before these their Successors drove them off the Stage.

Most of the Actions we commend are rather the Effects of Humour and Constitution, than true Virtue; for which Reason Men act otherwise in publick than when they have no Witnesses. Virtue, when 'tis not ambiguous, is always consistent with itself; the Pleasure of doing well is the virtuous Man's Reward, whether he be approv'd or censur'd, he still goes on in the same Track.

I would fain find the Man, who is the same, and acts by the same Principles when alone and unobserv'd, as when he is expos'd to the Sight of the Publick; but most People are virtuous no farther than they are fearful of Disgrace. Fear is their only Fetter, which they easily shake off when they find Opportunity to satisfy themselves by wounding nothing but their Conscience.

The Life of certain Men is a kind of Monster or Chimera, being a motley mixture of opposite Qualities; their Exterior denoting Mo-

Modesty, Sobriety, and Ways different from the Conversation of the World, but their Morals are little suited to Appearances. These very Men, who by their Character and Condition are separate from the World, are more worldly than others, more vain and beautiful, more curious of every Thing that can give them any Attraction. We could pardon them a thousand other Things, did we not see them in a dishonourable Commerce, which they take not sufficient Care to conceal.

Ought not the Government to regulate the Retinue, and Equipage, and Expences of some Abbots, who appear more immodest and haughtier than Pages; their Carriage is haughtier and more martial than that of a Colonel of Dragoons; you see them drawn in Coaches as pompous and magnificent as an Ambassador's making his publick Entry; all the Time they should employ in Study, is spent at Plays and Balls, Assignations and Taverns; they lose at Play vast Sums, which are the very Blood of the Poor; at Church they scandalize all the World, having neither Respect for the Sacred Place, nor Attention to the Holy Mysteries; their Life is a perpetual Imposture, they are a new kind of Colonels in black short Cloaks, and little Bands.

We constantly hear this Maxim in People's Mouths, that provided a Man has a clear Conscience, he ought not to be concern'd at Reports and Slanders; this is ill Reasoning, Reputation being a just Tribute we draw from our Virtue: That Indifference for the Esteem
and

and Approbation of Men, is commonly a secret Reproach of Conscience, which does itself Justice, but finds itself unworthy of it; they that are not concern'd at Scandal, live in such a Manner as hardly to be able to avoid it, and they encourage themselves against Censure by this feign'd Indifference.

Frontina leads a Life wholly unbecoming a young Lady of Quality, she herds with none but Women of a prostitute Character, who take no Care to save Appearances; she can't but know the Reports that are spread to her Discredit, and confesses that her Reputation is much shatter'd. To comfort herself, she is continually saying, that she leaves Fools the Liberty of Talking, and, that perhaps they'll let her rest, when they have vented their Spite, and Slander has spit up all its Venom. This Maxim is not sound, 'tis not possible to prevent Obloquy, but it's possible to prevent the Occasions of it; and 'tis no small Comfort to have nothing to reproach ourselves with when we are unjustly censur'd.

How many are there, that with no great Stock of Merit make themselves courted, upon the Hopes of their Services and Assistance? They intrigue at Court, at the great Men's and the Ministers; though they have but little Credit there, yet they are borne with; and they meet with credulous People, whom they persuade that they have Interest in them all; few there are at the Pains to trace them, chusing rather to take their Word for it, till they are deceiv'd and convinc'd by Experience,
that

that no great Stress is to be laid upon their Promises. If you would purchase a considerable Place at Court, if you have any Law-Suit of Consequence depending, they promise you that Post and the Success of your Suit, as if they commanded the Ministers and the Judges. The Prince disposes of the Preference to another, you are worsted in your Suit, and you know at last that they are Visionaries and Quacks that have neither Interest nor Abilities.

Is it to conceal the Shame of their Birth, that some People assume Airs of Greatness so unbecoming them? They for some time deceive those that are Strangers to them, but when they are discover'd, and the Obscurity of their Parentage understood, this so misplac'd Haughtiness is never pardon'd them.

There is not a greater Testimony of the Corruption of Manners and Perverseness of Judgments, than that Preference which is given to Quality, to the Prejudice of Merit and Virtue. 'Tis an establish'd Custom, that no body arrives to certain Degrees of Greatness, without being of an Extraction that prepares the way to it. The *Romans*, who judg'd so excellently of Things, reason'd very differently from us in this. A Man wanted nothing but Virtue to raise him to the most eminent Employes of the Republick, and perhaps it was this Emulation that made *Rome* so flourishing, and produc'd so many Great Men. The Times are chang'd, and Men of the greatest Merit, at present, don't grumble to see themselves

122 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

kept back from Preferments by Persons of an high Birth, but lowest Deserts.

A Man must be of a very insolent Complexion to boast on all Occasions the ancient Nobility of his Family, when he is of a mean Birth, and has no other Lustre than what his Wealth reflects, amass'd by the Rogueries of a Father who has robb'd the Prince and People. *Colin* brags an hundred times a Day that he is born a Gentleman; his Father was a Footman, and a thousand there are at *Paris* who have seen him in a Livery; his Comrades are still alive, who are unexceptionable Witnesses of the Meanness of his Birth. Content yourself, *Colin*, with being rich, make merry, and enjoy the Crimes of your Father; but let your Nobility alone, and don't oblige People to lye in Complaisance whom you entertain at your Table.

No Man is the more valuable for living at an high Rate, and much above his Condition. 'Tis better to have Gold in one's Coffers, than in one's Coach or Cloaths; but at present, the meer Gentleman, or the Banker, is not distinguish'd from a Duke and a Peer of the Realm; it being the greater or less Quantity of Money that makes all the Difference of Ranks and Families, and 'tis a Mischief that has no Remedy.

'Tis in vain to think of forcing People to remember us, who are willing to forget us, and have fixt their Resolution. Instead of regaining them to our Interests, we only exasperate them against us, and redouble their Resentments.

sentments. 'Tis much, if in the Disposition they are in, they don't do us ill Offices; we ought, at least, to guard ourselves against Treachery, and fear lest under their specious Appearances of requiting our Compliments and Applications to solicit them, they underhand play us some slippery Tricks.

'Tis vastly mistaking Men, to think to satisfy them with vain Compliments; they are too much interest'd, and expect from you real Services. *Aristides* embraces and kisses all that visit him, he offers them his Credit in the genteelest way, and most caressing and cokeling Expressions in the World. The same Compliment he made to *Hector* , he repeats to *Martin* ; but neither serves one nor the other. We easily believe what we desire, and yield to an Appearance of Sincerity; but our Hope frequently disappointed, breeds Contempt for those that abuse our Credulity, and makes them pass for Impostors. An honest Man ought to be faithful to his Word, and promise nothing but what he designs to give.

Those Ambidexters ought to be banish'd Society, that load with their Caresses and Embraces all they accost, and make them their Jest a Moment after: There's no Obligation to make great Protestations of Friendship to those we hardly know, but we are bound to spare them when their Back is turn'd. 'Tis acting against the Rules of Honour to treat them otherwise.

124 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

Lyfidor has affronted you, and you every where complain of his unkind Proceeding, and yet you court him, and are as much at his Devotion, as if all was well on his Account; you are never the same Man to *Lyfidor*, but when he is absent. 'Tis a Misfortune to be oblig'd to break with People that do us ill Offices, and to have it our Interest to keep fair with them; but wheedling is an unpardonable Fault.

They that to revenge themselves of Persons they don't love, or that have affronted them, spread Satires in Prose or Verse to decry them, take a base and scandalous Method. If they dare not confess them, they are like those that attack their Enemy behind, but have not the Courage to meet him Hand to Hand; if they do confess them, they make themselves irreconcilable Enemies, these being such Abuses as are never heartily forgiven.

The Poignancy of fine Raillery affects People that have a Taste: but how can those gross Ambiguities of obscene Wits be born with, who talk before Women upon all sorts of Subjects, with a liberty, which all that have any Delicacy suffer by it? Do they think to set up for Wits by an unmerciful Treatment of Women, commonly very virtuous, whom they decry by scandalous Stories, recounted to the least Particulars, to give them the greater Probability. These heedless Ways, these insipid Jest, these libertine Discourses, these Impositions and envenom'd Slanders, express a Mean-

Meanness of Soul, and a great Stock of Corruption, both in the Authors and Applauders.

If you'll believe *Clindor*, he is well receiv'd by all the Women; he boasts with an Impudence not pardonable in a Page, that he has had Favours from many Ladies, whose Faces, 'tis most certain, he never saw. His Vanity once met with a strange Mortification, he was glorying that he had given *Celanire* a Supper at the *Blue-Posts*, she immediately came in as he had ended his Story, and he did not know her: He was so out of Countenance, that he could not recover himself. A Confusion due to his Imposture!

'Tis a daring Enterprize to go to correct all those that have committed Faults; he that will suffer nothing in others to escape him, disturbs his own Repose and theirs too; Suffer *Eugenia* to pretend to Virtue and Discretion, every body knows her History, but she imagines she deludes the Eyes of the Publick, and looks upon herself as a Pattern of Management. What matters it, if *Faustina* affects a Cant to make herself distinguish'd, and repeats twenty times in a quarter of an Hour, a Word that is but just coming up? The Patrons of this sort make no Precedent. *Lucina*, who pretends to the Knowledge of History, every Moment commits Blunders, that provoke the Laughter of all that hear her; she confounds Times and Places, Names and Characters. What are the *Greeks* and *Romans* to you, whom she maims in this Manner?

126 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

ner? Give her her full Carèer, and don't unreasonably set up for a *Præceptor*.

'Tis too great a Cowardice, fillily to approve all the Fooleries of others, and to exclaim when they have said an Impertinence, *Admirably well! Nothing could be more happily hit on!* The other Extream ought to be as carefully avoided. Concur not with those Banterers that droll upon their Stupidity, nor applaud their foolish Jest.

'Tis somewhat inhuman by insulting Railleries to aggravate his Confusion, who has said a foolish Thing; and yet 'tis the Custom for some to laugh at the Cost of others, who are the ridiculous Subjects. Expect not that *Dorita* will pardon you the least Word or the least Gesture; all her Attention is employ'd not to hear the good Things you say, but to observe the Incongruities that escape you, which she catches up with a sneering Laughter; she's upon the Pinacle of Pleasure, when she can make you uneasy, or lessen the good Opinion that was entertain'd of your Merit.

The Flatterer indiscriminately falls to work, even upon the most common and trivial Things; he excessively commends the Wine and Meat; he continually repeats, to please the Founder of the Feast, *'Tis a most admirable Dish, and excellently well done!*

Great Praisers are commonly so, from their Weakness or Want of Sincerity; they dare not tell People what they think, but chuse rather

rather to curry them with obliging Lies, than to make them sensible of their Error, and set them right by sincere Advice. 'Tis a very impertinent Character, that of a perpetual Praiser. I had rather some People should give me ill Language, than hear their trivial Praises, which they prostitute to all Comers without Choice or Distinction. 'Tis a Vice to praise every thing, but 'tis a great Injustice to refuse People the Praises they deserve. How many are there that can't prevail with themselves to approve of any thing, and that are unaffected with the best things? They have a morose Delicacy that studies only to discover Faults, to have the Pleasure of censuring them.

Offer not to read your Piece to *Cleophas*, he is a Cynick who has a Fancy in his Head, that nothing is good but what he publishes, and that all the Sense in the World fell to his Share. *Cleophas* knows that your Book has been approved by good Judges, and that's enough to make him say 'tis naught: The boldest Stroaks will appear to him abominable. He will not spare, even those that actually please him, but rather will betray his Conscience than return from his *Misanthrophy*.

'Tis a very wrong Method to gain the Esteem of Men, to go about to deprectate those they have a Kindness for. A Man that mistrusts himself and his own Merit, has recourse to Artifice to recommend and put himself forward: If he has any Honour left, these Practices strike him with Remorse; but

he hardens his Conscience, and the Love of Favour and Fortune stifles all the Remains of Honesty.

Great Genius's have but little Admiration, because few things appear new to them; and 'tis not to be doubted, but Admiration is the Symptom of indifferent Sense, or extravagant Complaisance. Your shallow Wits resemble Children, who think every thing great, surprising and extraordinary, and make perpetual Exclamations. Men of Judgment, but withal of an easy and complaisant Temper, know very well what deserves to be praised, and perfectly distinguish it from what is faulty and indifferent; but they give way to their Inclination, and chuse rather to praise in Complaisance, than to be sincere and speak unwelcome Truths.



Of the morose Humour.

IT may be said in general, That the morose Humour is the Scourge of civil Society, that it banishes all the Pleasure of Conversation, that it is the most troublesome of all Vices, and the Poison of Life. This Moroseness is the Cause that a Man's never content with himself, nor any body else; that he's perpetually complaining without Reason, and that

that he brings most unhappy Troubles upon himself by his capricious and odd Ways. A Man of this Kidney always thinks People deficient in their Respects to him, and very sowerly upbraids them for the least Peccadillo's which his Spleen enlarges and represents as Monsters. If any one forgets him in any Ceremony or Entertainment, he thinks it an unpardonable Affront; the most submissive Compliments, and caressing Expressions, he suspects of Design; the greatest Successes don't affect him, and he always views Things on the worst Side, to create himself Uneasiness. Though a Man has us'd his utmost Endeavours to serve him in a Business of Consequence, he believes he has acted remissly, and in Concert with his Enemies; he murmurs, blusters, threatens to revenge himself, and, indeed, he's born to no other End but to torment himself and others.

A Man of a sower Nature indifferently dislikes what's useful or prejudicial to him; the Pleasure he takes in finding Fault, shuts his Eyes against his own Interests; the Preferment of his Friends does not touch him, but he laments the Disgraces of those that are no ways related to him; whatever Course the State-Ministers take, and whatever Events succeed their Actions, he always ill interprets them, to have Occasion for Censure; he accuses them of want of Judgment, when they bestow Favours; and of Injustice, when they are oblig'd, for good Reasons, to use Severity.

130 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

All the Steps that have been made these thirty Years by a Man born to afflict *Europe*, and who may be call'd the Scourge of God, to *Gerion* seem Master-pieces of State-Policy. In vain you represent to him that Chance, and a lucky Juncture of Times, and the Sluggishness of his Neighbours, have more contributed to his Hero's Success than his own Genius and Abilities; he continues obstinately to admire him: Tell him how he has been beaten, and what Battles he has lost, and he answers, that his Defeats give a Lustre to his Glory, and that even in the Field of *Blenheim* he out-shines the Conquerors. Get rid of this Stum in your Blood, *Gerion*, if you'll judge well of Things, remove that Jaundice from your Eyes that represents all Things of a wrong Colour; contemplate your Hero in his natural Proportions; strip him of his usurp'd and borrow'd Feathers, and he'll resemble the Jack-Daw in the Fable.

. In order to take off the Keeness of his Spleen and Ill-nature, he ought to suppose that the World is full of absurd and disagreeable People, that have rough and ill-bred Ways, and know not the Rules of Life; and that he must either habituate himself to the Fooleries of others, or sequester himself from human Commerce.

How quietly would Life flow on, if all Mankind was reasonable? But the Brutishness wherewith they treat one another, destroys all the Pleasure of it; it seeming to be their main Intention to make one another reciprocally
dis-

Concerning morose Humour. 131

discontented and uneasy. In all Matters of Debate, each thinks to make his Party good, though to the Prejudice of Equity. and Honesty: If you ask a Man any Favour, he either denies you, or studies how to draw all the Advantage of it to himself. There are some that carry their Ill-humour so far, as even to envy you the Benefit they themselves have procur'd for you.

The Morose and Censorious are extreemly troublesome, but 'tis likewise a contemptible Baseness, sordidly to flatter every Body's Opinions.

'Tis impossible to live long with Men without having frequent Occasion to complain; the best Way to preserve our own Quiet, is handsomely to dissemble the Subjects of Uneasiness that are given us. Has any one done any Thing to disturb you? You must not insult him hereupon, nor shame him by taxing him with his Fault in reproachful Terms; endeavour by Gentleness to reduce him to Reason and his Duty. Chuse your proper Seasons to insinuate yourself into him; if you say any Thing severe, soften it with good Nature, and let no Gall nor Vinegar appear in your Remonstrances. The least Thing that is said or done amiss before *Marsina*, she censures in a strange proud and ill-natur'd manner. She racks her Wits to vex you, and to find pretty Expressions to make the Company merry at your Cost: After she has said the same Thing an hundred Times, she repeats it again when no Body thinks of it, and when the Subject is worn

worn threadbare. Is it not a sufficient Mortification for one that has committed a Fault, to have Witnesses of his Folly? Ought we to add Insults to his Confusion, and continually lead the Discourse to the same disobliging Topick? 'Tis a Sign of an ill-contriv'd Soul, to take a malicious Pleasure in the Shame and Uneasiness of others.

Don't always make believe you see the Faults of those you converse with; instead of upbraiding them harshly with them, artfully overlook them, if you desire to please them with your Conversation. There are a sort of People whom you cannot accost without trembling, because they have always some vexatious Thing to say, or some ill News to tell, and they use no Address to save your Blushes, or cultivate your tender Part.

None but those whom we are nearly concern'd for, or are to answer for, should make us solicitous about their Conduct: Others may safely commit all the Extravagancies and Follies they think fit, whilst we have no Reason to be disturb'd at them. That's a humour-some Peevishness of some People, who always find something to reform in every one's Behaviour. What a bold Undertaking or Presumption is it to go to correct Abuses establish'd by a long Custom? The way to live easy, is to mind our own Business, and leave others to take care of theirs. Have we not Disturbances enough at Home? Why should we overcharge ourselves, and admit useless Troubles? But that which is most surprizing is, that they

Concerning morose Humour. 133

they that are most obnoxious, are the forwardest to censure the Conduct of all the World: They are not affected with their own Faults, though never so gross, but are alarm'd at the least Imperfections of their Neighbours; you would think it was incumbent on them to reform Mankind, and they were personally to account for it to the Publick. Leave others their full Liberty, you have need of your whole Attention for yourself.

If the Reprimands that are given you are well grounded, why do you take pet and vex yourself as you do? Profit by the good Advices you receive, though they are not, perhaps, given with a good Grace, nor with all the Softnings you desire. If you are wrongfully found fault with, you ought still to be the less disturb'd, since it is not you, but your Shadow, that's attack'd.

Though you ought not to be tenacious of your Counsels when you are consulted, yet why should you make your Remonstrances to those that don't ask your Advice? Would you be consider'd as the Tyrant of your Family? 'Tis a mighty Presumption to think ourselves capable of prescribing the Rules of others Conduct, and an intolerable Tyranny to pretend to subject them to our Humours.

The most ordinary Folly incident to old Men, is to be perpetually lecturing Youth, which repays them with Raillery. 'Tis not always out of a real Zeal that they censure others Actions, but an Effect of their Malignity, or the Infirmary of Age: Disabled to Pleasures,

134 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

tures, they are angry that others should be capable of doing what themselves did when they were young. *Cleantes* often says, that that which troubles him most in the Case of Mortality is, that People will frequent the Park, and Balls, and Plays, and enjoy all other Pleasures after he is dead.

Old Men that have Sense and Memory would be very useful if they were less censorious and morose; but young Folks can't bear the *Tedium* of their Stories of Times past, and their insipid Railleries upon the modern Ways which they can't approve; which is the Reason that they shun them, and so deprive themselves of the Fruit they might reap from their Precepts and consummate Experience; which is, perhaps, the only Thing wanting in young People to perfect and qualify them for important Services.

'Tis an unreasonable Scruple, or an extravagant Severity, to pretend to interdict Society all sorts of Plays; innocent and moderate Gaming, unites and keeps up Conversation. Persons of Quality, who have no stated Employments, are at a Loss, most commonly, how to pass their Time, serious Discourses being wearisome; but Play ought to be moderated, and we are to moderate ourselves in playing; they that play with Passion, or Avarice, or Interest, commonly forget themselves; they rage, and swear, and grow extravagant, when they have ill Luck, and betray the Sordidness of their Sentiments. Gaming ought not to be us'd as an Employment, and take

take up all our Leisure. 'Tis a wretched Profession to spend all one's Life in beholding the Cards, and throwing the Dice: Play ought to be consider'd only as an innocent Amusement to divert us from more serious Occupations.

Marriages would be happy and delightful; if the married would compassionate the Weaknesses, and bear with the Faults of one another. 'Tis a long Life they lead, who are oblig'd to be together Night and Day, and be they never so well match'd, 'tis hard if they have not some Things mutually to pardon each other. 'Tis very strange there are so few contented Matches, that People who have excellent Qualities, that are civil and well bred, come together only to make one another uneasy. They have neither Regards, nor Cautions, nor Complaisance for one another; they are desir'd in all Companies Abroad, and are as wild Beasts at Home; one would say that all their good Nature was exhausted out of Doors, and they kept only the Dregs of their ill Humour for their Family.

I can't comprehend the Politicks of some Women, that purposely give their Husbands Discontents; there seems to be something of Mystery in all they do, they affect Freedoms of Carriage and Complaisance to those that make Court and Application to them; they commend them before their Husbands, who can't be over-pleas'd to hear such sort of Panegyrics. *Frontina* affects to shew more Coquetry than she really has; she has no manner of Observance for her Husband, and tho'
he

136 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

he be very susceptible of jealous Impressions, she is extravagantly complaisant to the Sparks that caress her; who have Merit enough to be her Lovers.

The Suspicions of Husbands, and Disquiet they give themselves to trace their Spouses Conduct, are often fatal to their Repose and Honour. A Woman under Constraint, that is too closely watch'd, sometimes takes violent Resolutions, however naturally indispos'd to them. Too smart Reproaches on trifling Subjects, and the Peevishness some Husbands express when they lose Sight of their Wives but for a Minute, have never good Effects; these Misgivings open a Gate to a thousand Solicitudes and Debates that destroy mutual Confidence, and extinguish conjugal Affection.

Gentleness is the best Way to make a Man lov'd and respected in his Family. A Person of Quality makes himself contemptible, when he talks passionately to his Servants, and never opens his Mouth but to abuse them. If you express Anger in rebuking them for their Faults, if you are harsh and bitter in your Reproaches, you rather confound them, than possess them with the Desire of doing better; but they are too malicious to suffer this ill Treatment to pass unreveng'd, which their present Circumstances permits not to avoid; though their Sentiments are sordid, they have, however, a secret Pride, which renders their Injuries insupportable; their Presumption is not crush'd by the Weight of
Ne-

Necessity, they examine their Masters, and censure them without Mercy, because they judge of them by the Baseness of their own Genius, and by this means they make themselves amends for the ill Language and Discontent they have given them. Spite, which is a Consequence of their ill Fortune, and Desire of mischieving those who are happier than they, nourishes the Aversion they have for their Commanders: Nevertheless, the Publick hears them as creditable Witnesses, because they affirm they have seen, what only they have imagin'd; and sometimes the Imposture of a Servant scandalizing his Master, is more favourably judg'd of, than the Honesty of the Master himself who is falsely abused.

In order to live at Peace with others, we ought to be consistent with ourselves. A Man of a restless froward Temper, who knows not what he would, or would not have, puts himself upon many insignificant Motions, and gives Uneasiness to those about him, who must bear the Trouble of his Whimsies and ill Humour: The World abounds with this sort of People, and what Need have we to seek any other Cause of the little Satisfaction we find in human Conversation? People of the best Reason have sometimes Moments of Disgust and Uneasiness, in which they have much ado to support themselves. In my Opinion, when they find themselves in this Condition they should confine themselves at Home, and see as few as possible, lest the Publick should be a Witness of their ill Humour, and suffer by it.

When

When *Darfina* makes a Visit, she's no sooner seated in her Elbow-Chair, but she begins to harangue and declaim against her Husband, her Children, and her Servants; she enumerates all the Pranks they have play'd her, and all the Occasion she has for Complaint; and she asks the Company, whether she be not the most miserable Woman in the World: What Entertainment is this for People who mean only to be pleasant, and have no Interest in the Squabbles of *Darfina* and her Valets?

I would have nothing to do with People, who make a Mystery of every Thing, and give out their Impertinencies for Secrets. Young shallow Wits, and they that are over-sfond of themselves, magnify the Objects, and think that every Thing relating to them is of the greatest Consequence: They are always ready to sue you, if you relate again to others those Trifles they have intrusted you with, which merit not so much as bare Attention.

There's something of ill Nature in the faint Commendations of Things which deserve great Praises; but they that pretend hereby to lessen the Merit of others, only injure themselves. It's easy to perceive their ill Humour, which prevents not our doing Justice to those that excel in any rare and noble Qualifications.

Lyfimon believes that no Body has such a Share of Wit as himself; he can't be persuaded that others can do any Thing that is tolerable, for which Reason he is very sparing of his Praise, and pities the Works that every Body else

else applauds; he criticks them with a Moroseness that is a Diversion to Spectators, there being a sort of Comedy in the Motions and Contortions he gives himself, to lessen the Esteem famous Authors have merited by their excellent Performances.

Your denying just Praises to Desert does not always ruin the Publick's good Opinion of it; but it makes the Publick regard you as an envious or injudicious Man. If you desire to be esteem'd, and have Justice done you, be equitable to others, and let it not appear that their Merit is your Torture.

At last, after many Importunities, you grant what is desired of you; you keep People languishing that have need of your Assistance, and, instead of obliging them by your Favours, give them Reason to complain of you, though they have obtain'd their Requests. Discover not in an uneasy Face, the Reluctance you have to do them a Pleasure.

The Life of worthy Men is a mutual Correspondence of Benefits and good Offices: 'Tis impossible to live without one another, and he should banish himself the World, who should be good for nothing; but it is not enough to grant what is ask'd, unless it be given with a good Grace: Why would you lose the Fruit of a good Office, by giving it in a Way of Refusal?

If you would have the Acknowledgments of those you do a Kindness to, do it not in a languishing manner, as if it were in Spite.
Don't

Don't stay till your Friends explain their Necessities, and force you to assist them. Benefactions ill tim'd and temper'd, turn the Stomachs, and raise Indignation instead of procuring the Gratitude of those you disoblige, whilst you would do them Service.

To be always telling Stories, is a Sign of but an indifferent and superficial Wit, or that is fond and conceited of itself. But who can bear to hear the same Thing an hundred Times repeated? What do they mean who thus stun the World with their importunate Repetitions? Is it that the Pleasure of talking deprives them of their Memory or Reflexion, since they remember not that they have said but a Moment before, what they repeat with so much Emphasis, and give out as a new Thing?

But 'tis worse and worse when the Subject is flat and disagreeable; ever since *Felina* has lost her Cause, she can't talk of any thing else; she repeats the entire Pleas that the Advocates made *pro* and *con*; she computes how much Money this Business cost her, and reckoning all the Broad-pieces and Guineas she see'd with, during the whole Process; she clamours and declaims vehemently against the Corruption of the Judges, and especially the Rogueries of the Lawyers. Having given a long and tedious Account of her Affair, citing the Days of the Month, and the Persons that were concern'd in it, she is ready to begin it again, to entertain the next Person that appears in the Company.

'Tis

Concerning morose Humour. 141

'Tis a great Mark of Weakness to be eternally complaining of our Misfortunes, and deafening all we meet with the Account of them; we seek to solace and amuse our Afflictions by these Recitals; but in my Mind, we ought to conceal our Disgraces to all but those that can remedy them.

But we are not to believe that it is always in Chagrin that a Man declaims against his evil Fortune; it often proceeds from a secret Pride. He would insinuate that he has Merit, and that the World does not do him Justice; some Remains of Modesty will not let him speak more openly, but he uses this Subterfuge to indulge his Vanity, and in some sort save outward Appearances.

Those Formalists who demand Explications of the least ambiguous Word, and always think that they are ridicul'd, are conscious of their own Weakness, and deserving to be despised. A wretched Temper of Mind.

If you angrily demand Deferences to be paid you, People will flatter you, perhaps, in shew, but will esteem you never the more. A Man that discovers his good Opinion of himself, seldom procures Esteem, unless his Presumption be supported by eminent Qualities. Men that love Liberty in all Things, would bestow their Incense freely.

There needs no more than a single Word misplac'd, to cast a Man, puff'd up with his Merit, into a Labyrinth of afflicting Thoughts; whoever is under this Prepossession can promise

142 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

mise little for his own Repose. He always believes, some People have a malicious Meaning, and puts an ill Interpretation upon all they do, and all they say; their Compliments, Submissions and Civilities, are look'd upon as so many Affronts.

They are not always our ill Qualities that create us the most Enemies, but our Virtues and Deserts. *Plautina* falls foul upon *Ancia* only because she is molested with the Praises that are given this formidable Rival: She complains that she has done her ill Offices, which is only a Pretext to conceal her Spite and Jealousy. *Ancia's* Beauty and regular Conduct, her genteel and engaging Ways that have acquired her so great a Reputation, put *Plautina* out of her Senses, and have canker'd her against her Rival; she cannot tell how to pardon her her Merit.

If a Man could prevail with himself to seem not to hear those that speak ill of him, he would save himself a great many vexatious and troublesome Disputes. We must not pretend to hinder People from speaking their Minds freely, but it is entirely in our Power not to appear disturb'd; this is the shortest and surest way to baffle Obloquy, and to lenify the ill Humour of our Slanderers; they in some sort resemble Children, that the more eagerly persist to vex their Companions, when they are too sensible of the little Mischiefs they do them, but cease to disturb them, when they only laugh at it. Calumny most commonly proceeds, not from a Design of dif-

displeasing, or affronting us, but from the common Custom in the World, of slandering our Neighbour; but though it should be the Effect of Malice, yet the shortest Way would be to dissemble it, and not complain.

'Tis well known that some People throw out Jest and Calumnies, not with a premeditate Design of Mischief, but commonly to shew their Parts. Could they not find some innocent Subjects to pass their Time, without exposing themselves, as they do, to cutting Reflexions: Jest and Defamers frequently suffer the Smart of their own Jest and Satires.

It is not less cowardly to speak Ill of the Dead, than it would be to kill an Enemy incapable of making his own Defence: We live in an Age wherein every one takes great Liberties of judging his Neighbour; they seem to sum up the good and ill Qualities of the Dead, and to reprint in their Minds as their Passion leads them, their Subjects of Complaint, to make their Epitaph according to their Fancy. What a Cruelty 'tis to ill treat those that are incapable of Defence, whom perhaps they durst not look in the Face, if they were still alive.

The most vehement Slanderers and Defamers are sometimes such as are obnoxious to the greatest Reproaches; those very Persons that seem to applaud them, consider them with Horror, and give them wretched Characters, when they speak their Minds. Calumny is the Sign of a light, restless, jealous
and

and malicious Soul, that seems to content itself, or please others by so criminal a Practice.

A Man cannot forbear laughing openly at *Lucilla*, who constantly inveighs against Women on the least Suspicion of Gallantry. Has *Lucilla* forgotten, that before she was married, she had an Affair that made a great Noise in the World, and disgrac'd her? She can't flatter herself that the Publick is ignorant of this Adventure, when she was defam'd in open Court; since her Marriage, she has not chang'd her Method, and yet you would say, if you heard her talk, that she was the only regular Woman, that she descended from *Lucretia* in a right Line, and possess'd her Sense and Virtue.

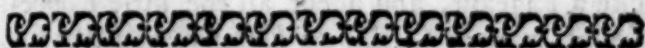
Is it out of Envy, that we blame in others some Advantages they have, and we have not, but perhaps would gladly have? Is it fantastick Moroseness that disposes us to find fault with every thing? Certainly 'tis not the Love of a strict Life that makes us exclaim against the Prosperity of certain People that flow in Riches and Honours; those that have made the greatest Exclamations, change their Sentiments and Language whenever any Glimpse of good Fortune darts upon them.

When we compare the Merit of some Persons in Favour, and find it inferior to our own, this redoubles our Indignation against them: 'Tis very rare to see Favourites generally approv'd. They that think they equally deserve the Posts possess'd by them, look upon
their

Concerning Impertinence. 145

their Favour as an Usurpation. 'Tis much if they have Reserve enough not to complain openly, and impudently set themselves above them by an odious Parallel.

They lose their Time and Labour, that set up for Reformers, since Men have always liv'd after the same Fashion: 'Tis an obsolete Phrase to say, the Age is corrupted; the same Vices and Passions, the same Dotages and Weaknesses, have always reign'd in all the Successions of Time. He exposes himself to Laughter, who reproaches others with the same Vices he is conscious of himself. They that by their Place and Ministry are oblig'd to take care of others Conduct, grow very contemptible, unless they lead an unblameable Life, or have Skill to conceal their Faults, and hide them from the Eyes of the World.



Of Impertinence.

Impertinence proceeds from want of Attention to our Words and Actions. An impertinent Man talks much, and inconsiderately; he acts in the same manner; he knows not what is to be kept in or dissembled, nor has any Taste to distinguish what can please or displease reasonable People: His Judgment is not so much as able to separate the Qualities
H that

that may set off a Man, from those that can lessen an Idea of his Merit. He is proud, haughty, incivil; he praises himself without Discretion, and despises others without Reserve, and often applauds himself for some foolish Thing he has said.

Pride is more easily pardon'd in Persons of a great Merit, but when those of but an indifferent one pretend to it, they only draw Contempt upon themselves. A little Pride is not misbecoming a young Woman perfectly handsome; Youth and Beauty give great Privileges. But would *Belisa* have Homage paid to her antiquated Charms, now she is past Forty? The Remembrance of Beauty past is a Counterpoise to Pride, and no just Occasion for Presumption. 'Tis vast Impertinence in an old Woman, to think to set up for Prettiness, to believe she has still Attractives, to dress herself like a Pageant, and affect all the little Fopperies of wanton Girls; to flatter herself that she is lov'd, and to talk of her Sparks.

There's no Man so foolish and impertinent, but may have Countenancers and Admirers; but they must be greater Fools and Impertinents than himself. Hence so many wretched Writings find Protectors, because all Readers don't abound with Sense or Justice. An Author should not value himself for seeing his Book extoll'd by the Crowd, but only be touch'd with the Praises of the Honest and Judicious. It's a miserable thing to be admir'd and prais'd by none but Fools. And
the

the ill Consequences these counterband Praises have, is to flush the Extravagance of an Author, who is still a greater Cully than those who stifle him with their Incense.

An Author who reads his Piece to his Friends, with design to profit by their Advice; who takes their Censures kindly; who yields to Reason, and corrects the neglected Places without murmuring, is to be esteem'd for his docile Temper. But the most intolerable sort of Men, in my Opinion, are those that are conceited of every thing they do, read only to be admir'd. What a Torture is it to hear a Fool applaud himself for a simple, threadbare, trivial Thought, and to see himself ravish'd with the Beauties of his Work, wherein the judicious discover not the least Glimpse of good Sense! A Man knows not how to behave himself towards this sort of People, for they will not be censur'd: Nor is it sufficient for their Vanity, that you seem to approve it by your Mien and Gestures, but they must be cry'd up and extoll'd. Men of Sense and Sincerity undergo a double Pain in hearing these Impertinencies, and being in some sort oblig'd to applaud them out of Complaisance.

'Tis impossible to hide one's self from *Fa-del's* Persecutions, he still finds you out, and has always his Pockets full of Sonnets, Madrigals, Ballads, and Epigrams; with one or other of which he attacks you: He declaims in the middle of the Streets, as if he was in

the Theatre: In a Moment he is surrounded, like a Mountebank, by the Passengers, who cannot sufficiently admire the Extravagance of the Man, and his ridiculous Fondness of Commendation.

To know a great deal, and pretend to nothing, are two Things hard to be allied. Profess'd Scholars are commonly extremely foolish and ridiculous, because of their absurd Passion to have their Learning known; they discourse of sublime Things to People that are unaffected with them, and who, instead of respecting them as learned, look upon them as Pedants, and Impertinents, that turn their Brains to hear them. *Climon*, in his Visits to the Women, talks of nothing but *Algebra*, and will force them, whether they will or no, to comprehend the Properties of the *Ellipsis* and *Parabola*: Don't mistake him, that his Design is to teach them *Algebra*, he would only be thought a great Mathematician. They take his Word for it, and excuse him his Demonstrations.

The Reason why the Learned are less fit for Conversation than Persons of a meaner Erudition, is, that they are not condescending enough; they would believe they dishonour'd their Science, and but ill maintain'd the Character of a Scholar, if they stoop'd to talk of Trifles, which make up the Subject of Discourse: Unless they are cautious, they often act a foolish Part, and are put upon by persons inferior to them in Learning, who with a good Grace, and lively Air, speak plain

plain and easy Things, which are much more affecting than the sublime Discourses of the Learned.

The Ignorant, and People of mean Sense, are they that talk most in Company; they have not Judgment enough to know that what they say is not worth the hearing: Men of Learning, whose Thoughts are deep in serious Meditation, speak but little; because they are either too attentive to what they are thinking on, or are not well enough satisfied with what they are to say. Others are more venturous, and presumptuous, and content with themselves and their Discourse; but they that hear them are of different Sentiments.

There's nothing more ridiculous than a Man who is constantly applauding his good Mien, and is one of the first to talk of it; who sets up for a Beauty, and a Beau, and courts your Commendation of his fine Shape, and his white Teeth. The Women that are caught by these Attractives, must be very silly. How can they endure a Man who has all the little apish Ways and Affectations of the Finicks? Whose Dress and Air, Discourse and Motions, and Actions, have nothing of a Man in them, but all is effeminate, even to the Wink of the Eye, the Motion of the Head, and the Sound of the Voice.

It has been often told you, *Philidor*, that your Behaviour and Discourse have no Affinity with your Profession; they that see you in the Campaign in the Summer, think they see another Man in you in the Winter. Why

150 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

that profusion of Ribbons, that wonderful Care of your Dress! You spend more Time at your Toilet than the meekest *Coquet* in *London*. You laugh at serious Matters, only to shew your white Teeth. Did you e'er read in the *Greek* or *Roman* History, that *Alexander's* or *Cæsar's* Officers wore Patches? Either quit your martial Profession, or behave yourself more suitably to your Employ.

Is it through Haughtiness, or Stupidity, that some People offend so much against *Decorum*? During a whole Visit they do nothing but repeat the *Airs* of the *Opera*, loll in an Elbow-Chair, swear brutishly before Women, whine to them their amorous Nonsense, talk of the Wines and Liquors they drank at their last Meal. Formerly young Men were studious of Complaisance; they were good-humour'd, genteel, well-bred, officious; but of late their Manners are chang'd, they are conceited, peremptory, unpolite, uncomplaisant, presumptuous, brutal. You'd think they never open'd their Mouth, but to disoblige those they spoke to.

Another Species of Impertinents, no less frequent in civil Society, are those that despise what others say and do, and are so sufficient in themselves as to discover their ill Opinion of it. Puff'd up with their own Merit, they can't condescend to admire any thing whatever. If any one has done or said any thing that is rational before them, and is prais'd for it, they affirm that it may be done better, and fail not to quote themselves
for

for Patterns : The Company laughs at them to their Face, and is not at the Pains to cure them of their Extravagance.

I salute *Dorantes* with all the Civility imaginable, I pay him my Compliment ; but he neither hears nor sees me. A Moment after he calls to mind that I have spoke to him, and I must compliment him over again. *Dorantes* seems to have all the Burden of the State upon his Shoulders, and that his vast Occupations hinder him from thinking of Punctilio's, and dispense with the Duties of Civility.

Lucilia is constantly quarrelling with her Servants, and without Occasion: A broken Glas puts her beside herself, and throws her off all Regards to those that visit her, who are forc'd to endure all the ill Language she bestows upon her Valets. She describes their Manners and Inclinations respectively, and is continually complaining she is a Woman the worst serv'd in *England*. What a Misery is this to her Visitants, who have no Curiosity to learn the Squabbles that happen betwixt her and her Domesticks.

'Tis almost impossible for Persons of the same Profession, or Candidates for the same Employ, to be void of Jealousy : If they can keep it from appearing, they will avoid the Shame attending that restless Passion ; if they cannot master their Indignation, they'll be guilty of a thousand Extravagancies, that will make their Discontent still more and more ridiculous.

152 *Reflections upon* Ridicule.

Those that have no Complaisance for you, but gruff you upon your good Successes, do it often from a secret Jealousy, and Apprehension that you out-shine them; when a Man is so unhappy as to be so mean-spirited, he ought, at least, to conceal it from the Publick, it being a great Impertinence purposely to decry himself.

'Tis a Pastime beyond Jestings, to caress a Man with Blows, to pluck off his Perriwig, to give him ill Names, and to load him with horrid Abuses; they that take this Method, do it only by way of Foolery, but it is a kind of Diversion which ought to be left to Porters and Footmen.

'Tis for want of Conversation, or Education, or through a foolish Simplicity, that some young Women affect too wild a Shiness, and too scrupulous a Modesty: A Man knows not what to say to them, nor what Subject to put them upon, to make them speak, so fearful they are of giving themselves Liberty. *Cleonine*, during the whole Conversation, sits with her Arms across like an Innocent, and never answers the Civilities and Compliments you pay her; or, if she speaks, it is with a languishing and silly Tone, and an Affectation that makes her ridiculous. Because she is handsome enough, she thinks it is sufficient to shew herself like a Statue of Snow, and that her red and white give her a Preference to all her Rivals.

Your everlasting Questioners are a sort of insupportable People; they allow you not
Time

Time to answer the first Question they have ask'd, but hastily begin upon a second; and all the Discourse consists in Queries and precipitate Answers. Great Talkers, who would still usurp the Discourse, love this rambling Method, but rational People, who always speak to the Purpose, don't find their Account in it. What Patience does it not require, to hear a Man that comes with a compos'd Look, and asks you an hundred Questions when you are full of Business, or are intent upon Things that will not suffer you to think on Trifles? It is so easy to discover whether his Presence be acceptable or unwelcome, provided he make any Reflexion, that he cannot be mistaken. But the good Opinion every one has of his own Merit, will not suffer him to see that he is look'd upon as an Impertinent.

How hard is it to command Attention any long Time in any kind whatever! the best Things disgust at last. In a fine Voice, justly manag'd, in a Lute delicately touch'd, there are great Charms; but continual singing, or playing upon the Lute, tires the Hearer. The Extravagance of those who have these Talents consists in persecuting you with their Airs, and their new Pieces, which please for the first quarter of an Hour, but fatigue afterwards by their Excess.

There are some Seasons wherein you must have Complaisance, and hear Raillery, unless you would be thought fantassick and ridiculous. He knows not the Art of living,

154 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

nor understands his own Interest who takes
 Pet at Things that are lightly said, and with-
 out Design to give Offence. If the Humour
 be innocent, 'tis brutal to make affrontive Re-
 plies; the surest Revenge is a quick and smart
 Repartee, that punishes the Humourist, or de-
 feats him with his own Weapons. If the
 Drollery be excessive, a Man may put on a
 serious Air, to signify that it is not agree-
 able, and that he has Reason to take Excep-
 tion.

'Tis but of late Days that Persons of Qua-
 lity of a certain Age have taken up Liberties
 amongst themselves, and a sort of Behaviour
 that would not be pardon'd in their Footmen:
 They have no Deference, no Respect for one
 another; their Language is gross Abuse; they
 unveil the Mysteries of their Debauchery, and
 describe them to the least Particular: Relations
 that should cover them with Confusion, if they
 had any Remains of Humanity left. This
 frank and frolick way of treating one another,
 is the Reason that before Women of Merit
 they are quite thrown off their Biass, and have
 not a Word to say; they are put into a pre-
 ternatural State, and by that Constraint lose
 that little Sense they have.

Foliniac is a sort of petty Master, that
 thinks himself very modish, and that he
 lays an Obligation on those he visits: He
 talks of nothing but Bargains, Dogs, Horses,
 Stag hunting, and a thousand chimerical
 Pro-

Projects of Diversion, and all this comes to nothing. He is perpetually citing People of the first Quality of his Acquaintance, whom he treats in a familiar Way. 'Tis impossible to carry Impertinence farther, and he is not sensible that all the World considers him as a Fop.

A Man not born to an Estate, if he happens to make a great Fortune, unless he have good Sense, grows haughty, contemptuous, and impertinent: The foolish Pride he is possess'd with makes him disdain Persons of a distinguish'd Birth and Merit, when they have nothing but Quality and Parts: Every thing that is not Gold and Silver, seems unworthy of his Esteem and Approbation.

Excessively and insipidly to dwell upon the Praises of all the Dishes a Man eats of at a Table, is a Meanness that bespeaks a sordid Education, and the Property only of wretched Parasites: But neither ought he that makes the Treat to take upon him to commend the *Ragoos* and the Delicacy of the Meats and Wines he regales his Guests with, that being a silly Vanity, unbecoming a Person of Quality. There's another Extream to be avoided by those that eat at another's Table, which is an affected Squeamishness, and boasting of the sumptuous Treats they have met with in other Houses, this is a By-way of despising what they have before them.

To be always in Admiration when we speak to People, is a Sign of Stupidity, or else an Affectation of approaching Flattery. The Judicious

156 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

icious and Sincere admire but little, and are not lavish of their Praises. Can't we compliment a Man when he deserves it, without making Exclamations? Those extravagant Praises do neither Honour to the Giver, nor Receiver.

Admiration is commonly the Effect of a gross Ignorance; great Admirers are usually great Fools, or silly Flatterers, that admire what deserves but moderate Commendation. You are allow'd to say that a thing pleases you, or to signify by some Sign that you are affected with what you see or hear; but intemperate Outcries, and violent Motions, that denote an extraordinary Surprize, are commonly Signs of Impertinence, of a groveling Soul, foolishly prodigal of its Incense.

Men love to be merry and diverted, and prefer the Conversation of Humourists before that of the Serious; but they esteem them less: There is in the Character of a Jester something mean and affected, that breeds Contempt.

He that would please, must be natural in every thing, even to Trifles, *Which is but ill observ'd* by those Tellers of News, which, tho' no Body is concern'd for it, they amplify with abundance of Circumstances, to give it the more Weight: They relate it with a mysterious Air, as if they were the great *Arcana* of the State. These Exaggerations tire and fatigue Men of Sense, but the Relator's Design is commonly to brighten his Narrative, and to enrich it with wonderful Particulars.

culars: he has little Regard for Truth or Probability; his End is to be admir'd: But in requital he is credited in nothing he says.

It is requisite in Society, sometimes to discourse of News, and the current Reports: But the Character of a Newsmonger leads to Ridicule. 'Tis a kind of Profession that degrades a Man beneath himself. This sort of People always accost you with the same Compliment: *How goes it in the World now? What News do you hear?* Whatever Business you have on your Hands, they never leave you till they have related all they know, or all they have dream'd.

I know not upon what Grounds Persons of Quality think themselves privileg'd to speak things against good Sense, and right Reason; their Quality does not authorize them; on the contrary, the higher they are rais'd by their Birth, the more they are oblig'd to distinguish themselves by a real Merit, which they ought to labour for: Nonsense is still Nonsense in the Mouth of a Peer or a Lord-Lieutenant.

Monder's magnificent Coach and numerous Train and Equipage, the Gold that sparkles in his Cloaths, and the Diamonds about him, give him the Ascendant over his Rivals, which contents him. He does not perceive that he is hiss'd by Men of Sense as soon as he offers to open his Mouth to speak. His inside is not answerable to his outside: But what matter is it, provided he can dazzle some Cullies,

158 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

Cullies, that judge only by the Shell and Appearance?

'Tis hard enough to comprehend how Women, even of Sense, chuse rather the Rich, without Merit, for their Lovers, than others excellently accomplish'd, but incapable of spending high. 'Tis a sign that Interest is their governing Passion, and that it was a true Saying, *That never any Superintendent met with Cruelty from Women.* Melanite has lately sacrific'd *Agatho*, a Person of an eminent Rank, and thousands of Charms in Mind and Body, and who passionately lov'd her; she has sacrific'd him to *Sotinet*, who is of the Scum of the People, and was of the basest Employs before his Rise: But he is very generous, and has a great deal of Money to spend: His Discourses are ill concerted, and he explains his Passion in a most ridiculous Way; but his Presents supply his want of Parts.

You would fain be the only Speaker in all Companies, whilst you have only Impertinencies to say, which you blockishly utter; if you relate a Matter of Fact, you run out into all the most frivolous Circumstances. Do you think you divert the Company by your loud Laughs in the wrong Places, and the Applauses you bestow upon your own Extravagancies? You depart contented from a Company, where every body is diverted indeed, but 'tis with your Folly.

'Tis a miserable Way of Pleasing, to scatter Smut in all your Stories, and intermix obscene

scene Ambiguities; be they never so carefully wrapp'd, they have always a bad Effect in the Mind of the Hearers, and denote the corrupt Morals of the Speaker. He loses Respect who uses this Method before Women; the freest of them are offended at it, who demand some Deference in Publick. Every body knows the History of *Dorimene*; she is hardly at the Pains to conceal her Intrigues; nor is she out of Countenance at the Declarations that are made to her in Private: But yet one loose Word, though not address'd to her, provokes her, and she pretends to blush at it.

An hair-brain'd Behaviour can never please, and I wonder some People affect it; 'tis still less becoming Women, who are never taking without observing the Decorum of their Character, that Reserve and Discretion which is their peculiar. Who can pardon *Corinna* her Passions, her Extravagancies, her Oaths, all the Snuff-boxes she has in her Pockets, and the Profusion she makes of Snuff?

Love makes a Man extreamly ridiculous, when arriv'd to an Age that ought to inspire him with other Sentiments. There is not a more silly Character than that of an old Doltard smirking upon a young and handsome Woman, who is out of Patience to hear him, and would not endure his Impertinence but for the sake of some *Decorum*. All that People do to make themselves amiable, when the Season of their Agreements is over, heightens and redoubles the *Tedium* and Disgust of the

ca-

160 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

carefs'd Parties, who take all their Courtships for so many importunate Fooleries.

No body makes himself the more esteem'd for Finery, and Expences above his Condition: It serves to provoke the Envy of others, who are not capable of doing the like; and they take out their Pennyworths in Satire and Slander. *Turpin*, who has but an indifferent Estate, is over Head in Debt, by running into an excessive Pomp: His mildest Censurers are content to say, That he too much forgot himself.

The Citts, who have Wealth above their Condition, when they have a little Vanity, disdain their Equals, and will converse with none but Quality, who find the Art of ruining them by the absurd Expences you engage them in: They carefs them, and embrace them, and put themselves upon a level; which Condescension turns the Head of a Citizen, already misguided by his Vanity: But he pays dearly for his interested Caresses, and when he is exhausted, he is sent back to his Counter.

You are ambitious to set up for a Wit, to be facetious and agreeable, when you have neither Wit nor Engagements. Those Wit-ticisms which you think so delicate and poignant, are nonsensical Fooleries that displease Men of Sense. Learn to know yourself better: It requires more Genius than you are Master of, to make judicious People Laugh. 'Tis none of your Talent; don't take that part upon you, you'll easily be excus'd it.

We

Concerning Impertinence. 161

We live not in the Age of Buffoonry, Quibbles and Puns, and Words with a double Meaning; that Nonsense and foolish Way of Jestings is banish'd the Conversation of well-bred Men: The Country-People, and Tradesmen who think they have Wit, still make it their chief Pastime: They ought not to be envied that Pleasure; but genteel People should no more make use of it than old Fashions.

'Tis good to have a gay and facetious Humour, but a Man must moderate his Gaiety and his Mirth: 'Tis unbecoming to break out into extravagant Fits of Laughter, that stun all the Company. The least diverting thing that is said before *Lucinda*, makes her ready to burst, she is no longer Mistress of herself: nor is she able to return to her Senses; her Fit of cackling proceeds even to Convulsions.

He that tells a Story, ought not to laugh at the first Circumstance he thinks diverting, as if to advertise his Hearers that that is the witty Part; on the contrary, he ought then to be the most serious: A merry Jest, told in a grave manner, has the better Effect; but you extinguish the Appetite of Laughter in others, if you prevent them.

Is there no Remedy to cure People of Impertinence? 'Tis certain all have a predominant Passion, and a favourite Vice, which they seldom conquer, because they scarce perceive it; their Attention goes no farther than to observe what makes their Neighbours ridiculous, which they draw in its proper Colours;

lours; nothing remains, but to turn their Attention homewards: They laugh at the Picture they have drawn, and don't perceive they have the Original in themselves.

Self-Love hinders our Knowledge of our selves, whom we sometimes applaud for Things which are real Faults, and offensive to every Eye. *Aristo's* Folly is, that being an upstart Tradesman, he would pass for a Person of Quality. He is rich, and has a stately House, and often entertains Persons of high Birth, who ridicule him, borrow his Money, have the Complaisance to hear him twenty times a Day boast of his Nobility, and how his Ancestors bore Arms under *William* the Conqueror: He has said it so often, that he at last believes it, and finds some Fools enough to believe it too.

You are of an illustrious Family; and there's no disputing the Antiquity of it; you have nothing to do but to live conformably to the Rank you bear in the World. The Titles in your Escutcheon prove, that your Ancestors had Virtue, and Courage, and Merit; and well serv'd the State; but if you are a Coxcomb, and lead a lazy and effeminate Life, the Glory of your Ancestors will not prevent your being despis'd and regarded as a Wretch.

'Tis not enough to be Noble, unless your Life and Actions answer the Nobility of your Extraction: Vices are much more unpardonable in a Man of Quality, than in the common Herd, that have no Education.

Per-

Persons not nobly born, who yet would mimick the Great, mimick them very ill; for they only assume false Airs of Grandeur, which expose them to every body's Laughter. *Celia* is only a Merchant's Daughter, but is grown a Countess by her Wealth, and will have nothing but *Turks* and *Hussars* in her Service; dismissing the Blacks to the Ladies of the Robe. *Colina* went on Foot, and was meanly cloath'd before her Marriage; her Husband gave her a Coach and Six, but not contented with that, she would have a Coach and Eight: Her Extravagance is, that she can go to Court with Eight Horses, like a Princess; but for a Remainder of Modesty, she would shew herself daily in *Hide-Park* with Six.

The first Desire which Riches produce in Persons of mean Birth, when they have made their Fortune, is, to equal the greatest Lords; they appropriate their Names, their Lands and Houses, from which they expel them by dint of Money: At twenty Years End the true Lord is confounded with him that bought the Lordship.

To be of a middling Strain, fluctuating between the Quality and the Mob, and to affect Altitudes not pardonable in Persons of the first Rank, is an Absurdity that can flow from nothing but a vast Impertinence, or a ridiculous Pride. Who can hold his Indignation, to see new vamp'd Tradeswomen, whose Dress and Train, and Furniture and Table, create Envy in Women of the first

Qua-

Quality? But the Comfort of that is, they incur *Ridicule*, by rising above their Rank, and put themselves to vast Expences to be laugh'd at.

Persons of obscure Birth spoil themselves with the Commerce they affect to have with Courtiers; instead of appearing to Advantage, they expose the Meanness of their Birth the more, by the odious Comparisons that are made of them. If Persons of Quality suffer them, 'tis only with Views of Interest, or to divert themselves with the Folly of a Citizen, who despises his Equals, and would, at any Price, have Intimacies with the Great.

What pretend People meanly born, who have work'd themselves into an Estate, to talk so much of their Ancestors, and to give out themselves for Noble? Do they think to impose upon the Publick; or persuade themselves that no body knows they sold Cloth, or Linnen, or Lace? Did they not talk so much, it might be forgotten: But their Conceit to be thought what they are not, brings the World upon their Back, and makes them take the Pains to rake into their Ancestors Graves, who might otherwise gently steal into Oblivion. 'Tis worse when this imaginary Nobility makes them so forget themselves, as to despise others: *Sylvena* is no longer to be approach'd; her vast Riches possess her with so much Pride, that she will scarce give place to Dutchessees. She suffers none but Persons of Distinction in her House,

or

or at her Table; all her Relations are excluded, and she neither knows them nor herself.

A Man of Vulgar Extraction, pretending to be Noble, regales himself with the Pleasure of being thought so. This chimerical Nobility is the Disease of those that grow Rich; they think their Money serves for a Varnish to cover the Meanness of their Birth; their fictitious Pedigree is every body's Jest. What Comedy 'tis to see People rais'd from the Dregs of the Populace, adorning themselves with borrow'd Titles, and because they bear the Name of the Lordships they have bought, have the Confidence to put the Arms of those Houses upon their Coaches, which they formerly inhabited as Servants! *Dantes* has long liv'd in the House of a great Lord, with the Title of his Secretary; he is perfectly acquainted with the Genealogy of the Family, which is extinct for want of Heirs to bear the Name; he has insolently usurp'd it, by buying the most considerable Lands possess'd from Father to Son, by the Lords of that illustrious Race. *Dantes* has caus'd his Genealogy to be made, and printed, and has deduc'd himself with Impunity from the most ancient Lords of the Kingdom.

He that has gotten a great Estate, is sometimes Fool enough to think he is grown Noble at the same time; he takes the Train and Equipage of a great Lord; he is lodg'd, and fed, and serv'd like a Person of Quality:

166 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

lity: The Great honour him, cultivate him, respect him, court him. Is it any wonder that so much external Grandeur turns his Head, and makes him think himself equal with those that treat him with so much Ceremony? Great Wealth is a kind of Sponge, that wipes off the Filth of the Birth, be it never so mean and miserable. No body takes it amiss that a rich Man should have a number of Servants, a fine House, rich Furniture, and a Coach, as being the Appendixes of Riches; but that he should pretend to Quality, and expect to be consider'd upon that Bottom, is a Folly and Weakness, that turns him into Ridicule.

Of Prejudice.

Self-Love has two Effects upon us, which contribute not a little to mis-guide us, and are equally dangerous. It lessens the Idea of our Faults, and renders them imperceptible, and magnifies the Idea of our Merit. These two Prejudices naturally tend to *Ridicule*. They are capable of Prejudice, judge always favourably of their own Merit, and find a great Inclination to despise that of others:

others: Which are two great Sources of Impertinence. Men are too easy and careless to study, as they ought, the Knowledge of themselves; they are blind to their most manifest Faults: If they have any good Qualities, they conclude they have attain'd the very Pinnacle of Perfection; which is a flattering and deceptive Prejudice, and an Obstacle to their knowing themselves and others, and doing them Justice.

This good Opinion every one has of his Desert, making them unaffected with that of others, is one of the Things that imbitters most the Pleasure of Conversation and civil Life. For 'tis hard at long-run not to drop something or other, that may notify their Disposition of Mind towards them: Men are too attentive to their own Interests to be long in the Dark as to other Thoughts of them, which Discovery distracts them, and inflames them against those who don't, as they imagine, do them Justice. 'Tis impossible a Correspondence should last long, when this is the Temper on both Sides; and if I mistake not, this is the Principle which extinguishes the fairest Friendships which were believed immortal.

The Prepossession of Pride is a kind of Drunkenness and Madness in some People; they think no Body worthy of them, or with whom they vouchsafe a Familiarity. A young Woman educated in this Notion, thinks there's not a Man upon Earth rich enough, handsome enough, and of sufficient Quality, to aspire to the Honour of her Alliance. Their
great-

168 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

greatest Offers can't flatter her Ambition: She expects a Man should drop from Heaven made on purpose. In the mean time the Years multiply, and Merit diminishes, and she is forc'd at last to make great Abate-ments.

Hortense was courted in her sparkling Youth, by a Man of vast Possessions, but because he was not nobly born, she would not give him the hearing. A Person of Quality came next, but his Estate was not sufficient, and he had the same Fate as his Rival. *Hortense* was young, beautiful and rich, and every Day made new Conquests; but the Prepossession of her own Merit would not suffer her to determine in any one's Favour, nor to fix her Resolution. She still found in her Lovers some Defect, which render'd them unworthy of her. During this time her Years are increas'd, and her Crowd of Lovers lessen'd, and *Hortense* bestows herself upon a Man whom she would not have admitted formerly for her Gentleman Usher.

The Reason why we are so indulgent to our Passions, is, that we behold them in such a Position as conceals their Ridiculousness and Deformity. The Miser disguises his Avarice under the Name of good Husbandry; the Voluptuous calls himself good-humour'd; a Woman defam'd by her Intrigues confesses she is a *Coquet*, and believes she is no more: But the Publick has not the same Indulgence. It calls Things by their proper Names, and judges of them with an inexorable Rigour.

It's

It's an hard Task to rectify a conceited Fool, and set him in the right Way; because his Views are too limited to perceive the Evidence of the Reasons you alledge to him: He pleases himself with his false Ideas, and flights whatever has no relation to them. *Lyfias* is only opinionative because he wants Sense, and at the same time thinks he has more Sense than others.

Prejudice hoodwinks People from seeing themselves as they are: We commonly think them ridiculous, whilst they perceive not the Part they act: The grossest Faults escape them, or if they perceive them, they shut their Eyes, because the Sight is offensive. They are glad to deceive themselves, and do all that's possible to deceive others.

If we did but mind the Manner we are receiv'd by People, we should easily know whether our Company was acceptable or burdensome. But we care not to do ourselves this Justice; being so far from imagining we are troublesome, as always to believe we do them a Pleasure: And therefore to compensate themselves for our Importunities, they make us the Subject of their Mirth, and turn us into Ridicule by subtle and delicate Ironies, the Malignity whereof is undiscern'd.

Would it not be better to make choice of People, that shew our welcome in their Face, and answer our Attendances with Pleasure; than to go and importune Men with our Visits, who look asquint upon us, and suffer us with Constraint? *Guzman* will pay no Visits save

170 *Reflections upon* Ridicule.

to Dutcheſſes and Princeſſes; he can ſcarce condeſcend to Counteſſes and Marchioneſſes. He ſpends all his Life in Places where he is look'd upon as an Impertinent, whoſe Company perhaps would be deſirable, if he could reſolve to viſit ſuch as are ſuitable to him.

'Tis a ſurprizing thing that Conceitedneſs of Authors; they reduce all the Diſcourſe, and moſt commonly very impertinently, to their Works. Nothing but Flattery will content them; they praiſe themſelves without Reſerve, and drink, like *Nectar*, the ironical Encomiums that are made them: The Prejudice in favour of their Merit, hinders them from perceiving how they are banter'd. Perſons fondly addicted to an Opinion, are extremely peremptory in defending their Notions; whether the great Eſteem of their own Sufficiency inebriates them, or whether they think others oblig'd to ſubmit to their Deciſions. This violent Fondneſs for themſelves, ruins the Delights of Converſation, becauſe others are not always in a Humour of Condeſcenſion, and then the Contrariety of Notions breeds a certain Sowrenneſs that begets Averſion, and ſometimes Quarrels.

Whence comes it that generally thoſe who diſpute upon any Point, or treat of any Affair, or plead for any Intereſt, always think themſelves in the right? Is it in Flattery of their own Abilities? Or is it not rather, that the M^{ts} of Prejudice are ſo groſs, as to extinguiſh the Light of Reaſon? The prejudic'd Man hears nothing never ſo reaſonable; he
ſeems

seems to be afraid of being impos'd upon: And never begins to open his Eyes till he is fallen into the Ditch; or, in spight of all the Advices that have been given him, has made an absurd Step, to ruin his Affairs.

'Tis a kind of Cowardice, not to defend our Opinion when we think it Just: but we should modestly propose our Reasons, that they that yield to us, may do it undisturb'd. If your Opinion be indefensible, don't obstinately maintain a bad Cause.

The Character of a *Bold Wit* is dishonourable in Matters of Religion: 'Tis an Extravagance to think to submit things to our Reason that are infinitely above it: But neither ought we to have a silly Credulity, for all that seems extraordinary, and all the Legendary Miracles that are so variously and improbably taught.

In the Censures the World passes on our Conduct, we are sometimes justly, and sometimes absurdly tax'd: If after a gentle Justification the publick will persist to blame us, we must wait till Time shall undeceive it: We provoke it rather than appease it by too much Argument in the height of its Prejudice. People have naturally a secret Shame to be deceiv'd in their Judgments; and there are Moments in which your nice and spirited People can't bear to be disabused.

A Man that offends us, from that Moment loses all his Merit, if we believe our own Resentment: His Wit, his Courage, his Estate, his Extraction, all his Virtues, dwindle

172 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

and vanish; and we vilify in all Respects, whom we highly extoll'd but a Moment before: We employ'd all our Pains, and Credit, and Friends to oblige him, and at present we play all sorts of Engines to destroy him. Whatever relates to him, his Domesticks, his Children, and Friends grow odious to us: This Change is ridiculous, and bespeaks a childish Soul, and the Force of Prejudice.

Otigny and *Fierville* were the best Friends in the World; their Neighbourhood in the Country cemented their Friendship, and they spent their Lives together, and mutually cry'd up one another. They have broke at last for a Trifle; and ever since they rage against one another with a Violence that would be unpardonable in an Enemy of twenty Years standing. All their Friends have taken great Pains to reconcile them, but to no Purpose: For no body can conjecture what is the Subject of their Quarrel, nor do they know it themselves.

Women of great Figure look upon Housewifery as a City Virtue: They can't persuade themselves to look into little Accounts to hinder the Robberies of their Servants. Nothing more denotes a want of common Sense, than the foolish Expences they are at: They know not what to do with their Money, when they have it; it seems to be a cumbersome Moveable that perplexes them, and they think they shall never see an End of it. Poverty treads close upon the Heels of so indiscreet a Management; after having lived at a great Rate
for

for a few Days, they want for a long Time, and fall into Ridicule. Misplac'd Expences do a Man no Credit; they ought to be manag'd with Design and good Oeconomy. The Countess of *Sardan* has a mind to every thing she sees, and she buys the most uselefs Trifles at the dearest Rate. If she sees a Piece of Furniture she has not already, she immediately orders the like to be made for her: She tries all the Artists that are reputed in any kind; she has her Cloaths made and unmade twenty times. Still restless and passionate for what she has not, she is never satisfied with what she possesses. That which charms her to Day, disgusts her to Morrow: Nothing can fix her Taste, because she follows only the Whims of her Prepossession.

Most Men live without Reflection; and are only govern'd by their Eyes and Ears: A sumptuous Suit of Cloaths surprizes them, and they think the Wearer more deserving than another whom they see ill-habited, and accost not without Reluctance. They never draw aside this outward Curtain, to view the Person more distinctly. A Man on Foot makes less Impression on the Mind, than another drawn in a gilt Coach, though he be but a Coxcomb.

The Multitude is bias'd by the Impression given by the Great Ones, who carry every thing according to their Caprice, and scarce leave their Inferiors the Liberty of thinking. A Man in Place is follow'd in his Censure or Approbation of Things, whether he understand them or not. The Figure he

174 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

makes, or the Authority he is in, dazles his Dependants, and they judge no longer by their own Reason after he has decided: Their Complaisance to him makes him no longer consult his Taste or Reason. 'Tis the Injustice of the Great, that they'll submit all their Inferiors and Expectants to all their Whims and Fancies; whether they think they have more Sense, or their Contempt for those before them persuades them this Sacrifice is due to them.

A young Man that desires to please, must be civil, and no great Pretender: For otherwise he would certainly incur the Hatred or Contempt of his Equals. How absurd would it be to dictate upon War or Politicks before Persons of consummate Experience. It would be a charitable thing to set him right, and make him sensible of his ridiculous Extravagance and Presumption: But no body takes the Pains to undeceive him, and let him know the Raillery he incurs: He grows old in his Conceitedness, and dies without correcting it. *Geraustus* in his first Campaign thought himself capable of lecturing the Generals: He continually quoted to them the Examples of *Alexander* and *Cæsar*, and some Scraps of the *Greek* and *Roman* Histories he had learnt at School, which he but just came out of. His high Birth made them seem to applaud him, and they were content to laugh to themselves.

'Tis a pretty vain Attempt to go to undeceive People prepossess'd with a good Opinion
of

of themselves. A Man very seldom succeeds in it, and he is commonly but ill paid for the good Advices that he gives. 'Tis an irksome thing to a Man, to find he has not all the Merit he imagines, and he never is well pleas'd with those who open his Eyes to his own Imperfections. That is a very ticklish Matter, and the Success is very dubious. It is so easy to incur the Hatred of those we would redress, that it is more conducive to our Peace to pass by some Defects, unless they be things of Consequence, and may have ill Effects: In such Instances we ought not to abandon a Man to his bad Conduct: But to what purpose is it to disabuse *Dorimene*, in telling her she is purblind, who is continually saying her Eyes are large and soft? *Aminta*, who is too plump and too full shap'd, thinks she's fine and slender. *Caritides* is but an half Scholar, and he flatters himself he is the greatest Man of his Age. *Cephise*, tolerably handsome, has so good an Opinion of her Charms, that she fears no Woman in the World for a Rival. This gentle Madness intoxicates them with an agreeable Poison: But if their Prejudice renders them ridiculous, however no body is injur'd by it.

There are few People but have their favourite Word, which is ever in their Mouth and has entirely won their Heart and Affections; and there are as few but have some favourite Fault, if I may use that Expression: That is a Fault they feel and know, but will not part with. There are some that carry the

176 *Reflections upon* Ridicule.

Extravagance so far, as to congratulate and applaud themselves for it: And it frequently happens that these darling Vices are such as are most unsuitable to the Person, and remote from his Character. Those whose Profession indispensibly obliges them to Modesty and Reserve, play the Bullies, and assume Liberty no ways suiting to their Condition. Women in particular, can't be too modest and reserv'd, and we have a very ill Opinion of those who are too free in Publick, and neglect *Decorum*.

Iphigenia is eternally boasting her Nobility. *Arianna* thanks her Stars for her fine Shape and delicate Complexion. *Phyllis* is perpetually talking of the Man that every body knows has a Passion for her. *Clarine* leads all the Discourse to her Person, and is tired in all Companies where no body thinks to compliment her. *Sylviana* talks continually of her Husband, her Children, her Management and Affairs. These Imperfections, tho' sometimes but trivial, lessen the Merit of our good Qualities, and give others occasion to turn us into *Ridicule*. Men naturally malignant fasten upon what offends them, and pass cursorily over those Virtues that might deserve their Reflection.

'Tis an Effect of the ill Nature of the Heart of Man, to contemplate others on their worst Side. We are so glad to find something in them that debases them below us, that we seldom fail to acquaint the World with what we find disgustful in our Neighbours: When we have
tho-

thoroughly examin'd them, we magnify the Idea of our own Merit, to draw the Parallel between us, and seldom fail to give ourselves the Preference. This is the Reason we are always so well satisfied with ourselves, and so contemptuous of others.

'Tis entertaing a wretched Opinion of a Man to give him the Praises he does not deserve; for it must either be thought that he has a great stock of foolish Vanity, or that he is ridiculously credulous. And yet this is the surest and readiest way to insinuate into the Hearts of Men: They easily believe that all the Praises you give them are sincere, because generally they are conceited of their Talents; and be they never so extravagant they believe they still deserve greater. Self-love, is a kind of thick Mist, which hides our Faults, and prevents our perceiving the Extravagance of the Flatteries we are gull'd with.

Alcippus flatters himself that he had a great share in the Victory at *Hochstet*: He talks confidently of the Dangers he was expos'd to. He deliciously imbibes the Elogies that are given him by the young Officers that eat at his Table, and humour his Fondness. *Alcippus* is too full of the Notion of his Merit and Bravery, to be possibly undeceiv'd; but he ought at least to have so much Discretion, as not to deafen Men with the Noise of his Exploits.

Every Writer, in whatever kind, unless he abound in good Sense, grows conceited with his Piece. It's Foundation sufficient for a

178 *Reflections upon* Ridicule.

Quarrel to censure the least Word of his Writings. It's lost labour to pretend to convince him of his Faults, and recover him to right Reason and true Sense. He thinks his Interest, and the Reputation of his Wit is concerned to protect all his Expressions and Thoughts. Sometimes with a sweetned Voice he intreats you to excuse the Places which he owns to be infirm and neglected: Afterwards he assumes a decisive Air, and magisterially maintains, that no body writes better in Prose or in Verse; and that none are unaffected with his Works, but through Stupidity or Envy: He complains of the ill Taste of Readers, that don't perceive the fine and secret Beauties dispersed throughout his Book; and to indemnify himself for the Indifference and Contempt of the publick, he admires his own Performances: But he is the only Admirer.

It's a pleasant Comedy to see all the Postures *Ilandrus* puts himself into, to have the Reputation of a Wit, and a good Author. He repeats you in a grave and mysterious Tone some fine Place or other, and makes an Exclamation at every Period. He insolently asks you whether any one thinks more justly, or gives a finer Turn to his Thoughts? You don't sufficiently admire, says he, the Fineness of that Expression: What a noble Stroke, continues he, is that, and delicately touch'd? *Ilandrus* believes as he speaks, and is the Property of his own Prejudice.

I pity

I pity their Misfortune who have not true Sense enough to perceive that they are regarded as Impertinents and busy Bodies, in Places where they think their Company is desired. The good Opinion every one has of his own Merit, hinders them from discovering the ill Nature of those equivocal Praises that are given them; which are nothing but artful Raillery, and a By-way of turning them into *Ridicule*, and trepanning them under Pretence of Applause. These ingenious Ironies, and Satires, with which they play upon us to our Face, whilst we discover not the Poison, denote a blind Prepossession, a ridiculous Conceit, and a kind of Silliness in ourselves.

Our Vanity is mortally wounded with that Discovery which acquaints us, that the Esteem of others is not answerable to our good Opinion of ourselves, or lets us see that they despise us. Every one is so prejudiced in his own Favour, as to think his own Endowments give him the Preference above his Rivals. Women have the same Fondness for their Beauty. But when they are given to understand that the World has not the same Ideas, and that their Rivals are preferr'd to them, they are absolutely in Despair, and never pardon it.

None but Fools, and People fondly prepossess'd with their extraordinary Merit, give way to be deceiv'd by fictitious Praises. 'Tis easy to distinguish a sincere Commendation from a rampant Flattery. He that speaks what he thinks, speaks modestly, and with an Air

180 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

Air of Simplicity that removes all Suspicion; but the contriv'd Admirations and Exclamations of Encomiasts must needs appear tasteless to Men of Judgment, who will not be obliged and loaded with Applause for things indifferent. Modest People can't bear these illegitimate Praises, and everlasting Panegyrist, that are ready to cry up the least Trifle. But as the Number of Fools and vain Creatures is very great, this sort of People always find enow that greedily suck in their Poison, and are caught by their prostituted Flatteries.

Nothing better manifests the Injustice of Men, than the Pleasure they take in hearing themselves flatter'd, and the Repugnance they have to flatter others: They would be applauded for every thing they do, and the most indifferent Talents; but are unwilling to do Justice to the Desert of others. 'Tis rising above the ordinary Sphere of Man to give them gladly the Praises they deserve, without desiring the same returns: But 'tis certainly the best way of procuring the Love of those we converse with, to indulge their Self-love, and frequently mention the good Qualities they think they have, without obliging them to do the same, or demanding a Tribute which is always unwillingly paid.

Our Fondness for our own Merit, and the diminutive Notions of the Merit of others, is that which makes us so forward to receive Praise, and so backward to give the like: But if any one, over sincere, comes to open
our

our Eyes, he does not much oblige us by his officious Zeal, and from that Moment we rank him in the Number of our Enemies. *Lucette* has broken with *Egina*, who was her best Friend, and was much in her Affections, because she acquainted her that her Fondness for a Spark of her's was scurvily interpreted, and blemish'd her Reputation: She has broke off all Correspondence, instead of thanking her for her good Advice.

A Woman but indifferent handsome is ravish'd if you compare her with the most accomplish'd Beauties. Is it that she does not know herself, and is flatter'd by all her Glasses? A Man that has any Talent in Wit, and writes tolerable Verses, matches himself with the most famous Poets, and must have some Remnant of Modesty and good Sense, if he does not give himself the Preference. These are the Effects of Prejudice, which are the same with those of Microscopes; it prodigiously enlarges Objects: And indifferent Qualities contemplated through Prejudice, seem the most eminent Accomplishments. A passable Beauty adorn'd with the Charms of Prepossession, eclipses all other Faults.

I can't conceive why Men are generally so fond of Praise: Most of those that give it season it so ill, that it must needs be nauseous to Men that have any true Palate. A gross Flatterer unskill'd in the nice Management of Praises, exclaims upon the least Trifle. If you read your Work to him, to know his Opinion of it, the most common Thoughts and
Ex-

182 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

Expressions puts him into an Extasy. The grossest Faults it swarms with, don't offend him. If you have done an indifferent Action, neither wanting Praises nor Censure, he loads you with exorbitant Praises, and prefers you to the first Men of the Age. A Man must be a perfect Cully to be lured with so rank Flatteries, and vain so greedily to court the *Encomiums* he so little deserves.

The Profession of a Flatterer is base and scandalous, but it seems to be a necessary Profession, since every Body wants Flattery. Musick is not more agreeable to a musical Ear, than Flattery to vain-glorious People. 'Tis a Charm that pleasingly bewitches him, and the wildest of Men give way to be tam'd and sooth'd by this Inchantment. That which is most surprizing, is, that so many delight to be flatter'd upon an imaginary Merit, and Talents not their own. A Man of an obscure Birth, but faintly puts off the Discourse of the Nobility of his Ancestors. A Woman betwixt handsome and ugly, finds a secret Pleasure in hearing those Charms extoll'd which her Flatterers liberally endow'd her with. They that are free from all Prepossession, and do themselves Justice, can no more suffer unmerited Praise, than the Modest can bear the least Infringement upon Modesty: But when Flattery is handsomely dress'd, and Praises are finely wrought, they work upon the severest Tempers. 'Tis a Weakness indeed, and in right we ought no more to receive the Praises we don't deserve, than the Money that is
not

not due to us: And we ought moreover to intimate to presumptive Persons, that they are the Properties of a sly and delicate Raillery, and the Subjects of the Banterers. *Philante* leaves the Company, charm'd with envenom'd Commendations; she every where boasts what Elogies she receives from Persons of great Merit and Reputation; but such as could penetrate their Designs, could easily see that they played upon her Credulity.

The Reason why certain People conceal the Meanness of their Birth, and assume chimerical Pedigrees, is the presumptuous Opinion of their own personal Merit, or an Effect of Pride which their Wealth inspires them with. Such as have Occasion for their Assistance, countenance their Conceit purely in Complaisance; others are not at the Pains of examining whether their Titles are legitimate; thus their Nobility by Degrees gets Footing in the Belief of the World: After they have convinc'd themselves of their great Extraction, they have the less Difficulty to make others believe it.

Ceraſtus can scarce read; if he ventures to talk of the least Matter, he moves your Pity; he has not Sense enough to perceive he wants it, and yet he thinks his Parts qualify him for the greatest Employ: If you'll believe him, he may be trusted with the most difficult Affairs: He would accept the Title of Ambassador in the first Courts of *Europe*. What must *Ceraſtus* study to be undeceiv'd? He need only study himself; but no Body
cares

184 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

cares to view himself on his worst Side. You see the Reason why it is so rare a thing to see People correct their Faults; they throw their Eyes off from a Prospect that disturbs their Vanity, and cast about to find something in themselves wherewithal to feed their Complacency and Prepossession.

Nicander, with his flaxen Periwig, his Knot upon his Sword, his embroider'd Coat, and large Diamond on his Finger, thinks himself the Charm of all Conversation; whilst his insipid Discourses, and silly Things he childishly vents, tire all the Company. Because he is well made, and richly cloath'd, he thinks to set up for a charming and fine Talker; but the Pleasure he gives in seeing him, does not balance the Pain of hearing him. He resembles the Peacock in the Congress of Birds, which outshines them when he blazons his Plumes, but is hissed when he goes to sing.

We more easily bear with a timorous Person that talks little, than a Blunderer that talks always with wonderful Assurance. Ignorance is commonly the Principle both of the Confidence of the Presumptuous, and the Reserve of the Fearful. An Ignorant, conceited of an imaginary Merit, talks with Assurance, because he thinks all admirable that he says. He that is convinc'd of his Ignorance, and withal restrain'd by his natural Fear, dares not open his Teeth. Ignorance and Presumption, which ought to be incompatible, are always inseparable. Presumption

ption is a Consequence of Self-conceit; this Sufficiency makes a Man uneasy to inform himself of what he is ignorant of: And as he dares not confess his Ignorance, he chuses rather to expose himself to *Ridicule*, by playing the Doctor, than modestly own his Weakness, and make Amends for his want of Capacity by that sincere Confession.

It is but three Months ago that *Simonet* first enter'd into the World, and began to see Company; and yet he gives Sentence upon every thing as a supreme Judge: He talks with equal Presumption of War and Civil Law, and reverses the Decrees of Chancery, and enumerates all the Faults our Generals have committed the last Campaign. It is but a Week ago that *Simonet* was still lectur'd in the Civil Law; how comes he by so vast a Science? He talks upon all Subjects with the same Liberty and Assurance as if he had studied them: He takes up a Man eminent for his Station and Merit, and boldly tells him he is mistaken in the Fact he has been relating. Get rid of your Prejudice, *Simonet*, and when you have removed that Film, you'll clearly see how ridiculous you make yourself.

Ordinary People seem always off the Hooks, Pleasures and Business equally confound them; but Genius's of a superior Order pass from Business to Pleasure, without Trouble: Always their own Masters, they lend themselves to Diversions and Affairs, without being entirely possess'd by either, and never

never neglect Business for the sake of Pleasure.

An Excess of Presumption renders a Man negligent and lazy, and often ruins the best Affairs. A Man depends upon his good Fortune, and neglects the Precautions taken by others of less Abilities who mistrust them. Hence Men of Parts, that can't condescend to little Formalities, are commonly over-reach'd by Fools, that leave no Stone unturn'd to accomplish their Designs.

It's a great Stupidity to treat a Man as our Cully, who is more subtil and politick than ourselves, but who puts on a Disguise and a studied Plainness to bring us into the Trap he has laid for us. They that are always upon the Ketch or Stratagem, even to the least Trifles, who are still acting the Politician how to deceive, deserve to be treated as they study to treat others.

There is generally some Injustice in judging of Things only by the Event; for whatever good Conduct was taken in an Affair, if it don't succeed, we blame the Managers, tho' the Fault was none of theirs. We fasten our Eyes upon the Surface, and never dive into those secret Springs that stop'd the Motion of the Engines play'd, when, in the mean time, such Measures were taken as promised an happy Event, had it not been for those Obstacles in the way which human Prudence could not foresee. Hence commonly proceed those our absurd Censures of Men of Merit, who have fail'd of the Success that might reasonably
be

be expected from their Endeavour. A few Things are able to disappoint the best concerted Enterprize. Men of Sense and Equity judge not by Appearances, they go to the Bottom of Things, and can do Justice to a Man of Honour, who has omitted nothing, but who was ill seconded, or rather was undermin'd, by ill-intention'd People.

The generality of Women, who have any thing of Beauty, think to outshine others; and as they are impatient of Rivals, they decry them as much as possible: They are at once presumptuous and timorous, as to the Force of their Charms. A very fantastick Character! They don't think they have any thing to fear from others, and yet their Jealousy gives Reason to believe they dread them, by the Pains they take to destroy them.

If you love your own Quiet, never praise any Woman's Beauty before *Celinta*; she'll make a personal Quarrel on't, and upbraid you with Injudiciousness or Prejudice. She always finds some fault in the most regular Features. She has an inconceivable Eloquence at heightning or depressing what is handsome or ugly in a Woman. The softest and most engaging Eyes, to her appear gloomy and melancholick. She maintains that a noble and advantageous Shape is gigantick; that a moderate one, but easy and proportionable, is Pigmy like. If the fair *Helena* should rise again with all her Charms, she would

would see herself degraded from her Beauty at *Celinta's* Tribunal.

'Tis not sufficient for a Woman to be conscious of nothing to herself; she must also regard Externals, and prevent the Publick's touching upon her Conduct in any part whatsoever. A Man is a thing of so tender a Constitution, that bare Appearances ill managed wound it. Those Women that say they care not what the World says of them; and that the Testimony of their Conscience is sufficient, have too little Delicacy. Reputation is the justest Recompence of Virtue, and it ought not to be neglected.

I know not whether it proceed from Jealousy, or Spite natural to Men, that they are ever disposed to judge ill of Women; whether the great Numbers of those that forget themselves prejudice the rest, or whether they really too much neglect the Judgments of the Publick, they can't trip ne'er so little, but they are treated without Quarter; the least Liberties they give themselves, are made criminal. I think that instead of complaining of the Injustice of Men, they ought rather to cultivate their Niceness by a great Reserve, and so not give them any Occasion to talk with any Appearance of Reason.

Your easy and credulous People have continually one Vision or other in their Brains; they that know their Temper take Advantage of their weak Side, and promote their Chimera's, instead of attempting to cure them. What Extravagancies has not the per-

persuasion of Sorcery occasion'd: 'Tis the hardest thing imaginable for a Man to get rid of it: It requires a stronger Head than sits upon most Men's Shoulders, not to believe a thousand things which come naturally to pass, to be the Effects of some Spirit, or the Pastime of some invisible Power. The cunninger sort serve themselves of this Prejudice to decoy the simple into the Net they spread for them, and which 'tis next to impossible to avoid. A Brain infatuated with these supernatural Whimsies, is seldom cur'd of them.



Of Interest.

THE natural Desire all Men have of a comfortable Subsistence, commonly engages them in mean and fordid Actions: 'Tis a very nice Temptation to be in the way of getting Money, and to be govern'd by no Principle but Conscience, and he that does not fall under it must be of a well appointed Virtue. Most Men think Indigence the greatest of Evils, and that every thing is allowed them to get rid of it: Stratagems, Shifts, Tricking and Knavery, all Engines are play'd, and if they succeed, the publick Voice absolves them.

There

There are a sort of People in the World that live only for themselves, and drive at nothing but their own Interests and Pleasures; they love no body, and no body loves them; they are guilty of Incivilities, and say the roughest and most disobliging Things in Nature, untouch'd with the Vexation they give others, and not so much as reflecting on't. Undisturb'd at Contempt, and unconcern'd at the ill Reports that go of them, they neglect the Duties that Reason and Decency demand, and sacrifice every thing, Relations, Friends, and Honour, to their Gain and Advantage. In all Dealings and Transactions with such People, a Man must always be upon his Guard against Trick and Deceit: If they play, 'tis always upon the Sharp, and they cheat as often as they can, tho' they only play for Trifles. If you surprize them, they only make a Jest of it, and value not the Disgrace, provided any thing can be got by it.

The Reason why Men are so unjust in their Treatment with one another, is, that they always act through some Passion; the Passions that are generally engaged, seek their own Satisfaction, without observing Right or Wrong. Whoever is under the Government of a Passion, be it never so irrational, thinks he is always in the right, and his most extravagant Proceedings give him not the least Scruples.

Self-Love is the Ruin of Society: Most Men think only on themselves, and every thing
else

else is very indifferent to them; they never sympathize with others Joys or Griefs. People of this Character are as it were unhinged from the Universe, and of no use in the World; they are crowded and wrapt up in themselves, and never extend beyond their own Circumference.

The Friendship that reigns at present in the World, is nothing but a Commerce of pure Interest. This Principle, though extremely sordid, is very much in Practice; 'tis great Baseness to neglect People when they become useless, and we have no farther Occasion for their Assistance. How cruel is it, in their Disgraces, to refuse them the good Offices in our Power which we should gladly offer them were they in a better Situation? This is what is to be expected by Persons put out of Place. They see themselves in a Moment forsaken by all those that were most officious in their Courtships, who now will not seem to know them, but shun them, as if they fear'd the Contagion of their Misfortunes in approaching them. I believe 'tis one of the greatest Pains of their Disgraces, to see the Ingratitude of those they have been generous Patrons to, in the Sunshine of their Favour: But 'tis a Disease there is no Cure for.

Celanor, from the Pinacle of Favour, is fallen into the lowest Disgrace, and all his Friends have turn'd their Backs upon him in a Moment: Those that he had rais'd highest, have abandon'd him as the rest. He has often said in his Imprisonment, that his own

Misfortunes less afflicted him, than the Treachery of his Friends, who carried their Ingratitude so far as to do him ill Offices. That which flatters the Vanity of great Ministers, is, to see themselves surrounded and respected by a numerous Crowd, that make their Court to them, and wait at their Levees: But if they could read the Sentiments of those that thus seem to adore them, and knew the Motives of the servile Homages they pay them, they would not be so fond of them.

The most unpardonable Madness is that of the Covetous; though they overflow with Wealth, they are poor and wretched in the midst of it. To what End does *Phylargyrus* heap up so much Treasure? He is old, and has no Children; no body pays any Court to him, nor has he any Affection for any body, or any Acquaintance; and yet he every where enlarges his Income, and raises his Rents: He's ill lodg'd, and as bad cloath'd, and sees not a Fire all the Winter; he sponges upon his Neighbours, to save the Charge of a Dinner: In a word, he denies himself all Necessaries. What Difference is there betwixt *Syrus*, who wants every thing, and *Phylargyrus*, who possesses a vast Estate, but makes no use of it?

The most self-interested, and hardest Men, that have no Consideration for any body, would have others full of Respects to them. We could more easily pardon them their Fondnesses for themselves, if they had the like Indulgence for others. Their rugged way
of

of treating those that deal with them is very unreasonable: The more you stoop and condescend, the more difficult and crabbed they appear: They have nothing but Rudeness, Austerity, and Indifference for those from whom they expect Complaisance, Affability, and good Offices.

I am not myself, when I see with what an haughty and discouraging way the Countess of *Marine* treats those that have any thing to do with her. Inflexible to all the Expedients that are proposed to her, she will never depart from the least Punctilio of her Interests; her Mouth never opens but in Menaces which make her Debtors tremble; she talks of nothing but their Imprisonments and Arrests, and Executions upon their Goods and Chattels: She is always surrounded with Bailiffs and such sort of Vermin, made for the Ruin of Mankind. She is not softened with the Tears of Orphans and Widows; she loves nothing but Money, and she rolls in it.

He that has not the Courage to venture his Life and Fortune for his Friends, when 'tis necessary for their Interest, ought to be regarded as an indifferent and lukewarm Person. We find few People in this Age of the Character of that Emperor who daily thank'd the Gods for having given him the Empire, because it enabled him to do Good to his Friends. He was uneasy when a Day pass'd without giving him Occasion to shew some Marks of his Bounty; whatever his Successes were besides, he reckon'd them all nothing,

thing, if his own Hand had not been exercised in Liberalities. A Man must be of a generous Constitution, and a large Soul, to maintain this Character long: He that is beneficent by Art, seldom goes very far, and insensibly returns to his Nature; which is the Reason that Men so often desert their Friends, when they have most need of their Assistance.

If you expect to be courted, you must be good for something: This is the Rule, You must play, or lend Money, contribute to the Pleasures, engage in the Interests of Men, and let them see that you are of some use to them, In the good Offices they do you, they would see your Securities; that is, whether you are capable of repaying them in the same Coin. Disinterestedness and Generosity are Things which now no body understands, and therefore expect nothing from the Liberality of Men, unless you are in a Condition to oblige them in your Turn. I would fain see the Man who obliged People, out of a Greatness of Soul, and for the mere Pleasure of doing Good, without Hopes of a Return: Where is this Phœnix to be found?

Interest has banish'd Friendship from the World; there's nothing to be met with but false Friends, who offer themselves with all the Shews of Zeal, and are profuse in Expression; who amuse you with the most flattering and obliging Discourse. They profess to serve you if ever Occasion offers; but if the Occasion comes, they give you the Slip, and desert you. This ardent Zeal is cool'd

in

in a Moment, and chang'd into a surprizing Coldness: They are out in their Argument, if they think to gain the Friendship of Men, by their Compliments and vain Offers of Service. This Noise serves only to stun the too credulous; we quickly perceive their Insincerity.

The Sentiments of Humanity incline us to comfort the Miserable, and 'tis failing in the most essential Duties, to abandon them in their pressing Occasions: But it is utmost Excess of Cruelty to insult them in their Misfortunes. A Man fallen into any Disgrace is to be pitied; if you have not the Generosity to lend him your Hand to retrieve him, don't add a new Weight to his Disgrace to sink him utterly. And yet Men are so brutal and unmerciful, as to lash a Man with the keenest Satire, who is dropt, and out of Favour. The first Thought that occurs upon the Adventure of a Man displac'd, is to seek the Reasons of his Disgrace in his Conduct. They neither offer in his Excuse the Misfortune of the Times, nor the Posture of Affairs, and Conjunction of Things; but will absolutely have him guilty, and invent a thousand Stories to discredit and ruin him beyond Recovery. This is the Make and Temper of Mankind.

A Man that plays the Knave to throw another out of his Post, and put himself in it, is absolved by the publick Voice if he succeeds: But for People to fall foul upon Persons of Merit, without any Prospect of Interest, meerly for the malicious Pleasure of do-

ing Mischief, is a Practice that ought not to be known amongst Men. Such People ought to be banish'd Society, as wild Beasts: But who would escape, if this Rule was strictly observed?

There ought to be something in the Returns of Gratitude that are free and easy; when our Acknowledgments proceed from Duty, Views of Interest, and a kind of Necessity, we always discharge this Duty with an awkward Grace. Benefits impose a kind of Yoke which the Ungrateful would, as soon as possible, be deliver'd from; and he must have a great Soul that can bear it without Uneasiness.

We ought not to make use of our whole Power, nor take the Advantage of our Authority to the full Extent of our Rights; there are a thousand Things we ought to wave in Civility and *Decorum*, which if demanded would make us thought fantastical and troublesome. The Laws of Treaties require mutual Concessions and Abatement for the sake of Peace: This Maxim is not to the Palate of interested Persons, who chuse rather to lose their Ease, their Reputation, and their Friends, than recede from the least Particular.

You see the Source of those eternal Law-Suits, which are perpetuated in Families, from Father to Son, to their utter Ruin. If People understood themselves, if they knew their true Interests, would they give the clearest and most unburden'd part of their Revenues, to fatten the greedy Judges, who live by the Follies of Mankind, and instead
of

of saving them from the Gulf they fall in, plunge them deeper and deeper by all the Arts of Barretry, wherewith they entangle their Affairs?

'Tis a great Misfortune to be born high-spirited and poor; a Soul of this Make has much ado to submit: But Necessity forces Nature, and the Encounter is severe. People of this Temper seldom make their Fortune; they have not still the Power to subdue their own Inclinations to the Fancies of those they depend on, who set the Services they can do them at too high a Rate.

Arcides has miscarried in his Fortune, by not being able to conquer and captivate himself, and express Complaisance and Submission to *Sylverian*. It went very hard with him to see himself confin'd in an Office, under the Authority of a Man who had neither so much Brains, nor so good Blood in his Veins: But he enjoy'd a Post that made him paramount, and at the same time he had very good Intentions for *Arcides*, who could make no use of them: He chose rather to renounce his Fortune, than purchase it by such Basenesses a Dependants are oblig'd to pay to their Superiors, who continually make them sensible of their Distance and Subjection, in a severe and offensive Manner.

When Men have Occasion for others Services, they cultivate and caress them; but after they have received the Kindnesses expected, they are uneasy in their Company, and care not to see their Faces, especially if

198 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

their Obligations be great. Is this Pride, or Ingratitude, or both together?

'Tis from the same Principle People flatter the Favourites, and blame the Discarded. They pay their Court to the former, to share the Influences of their Favour; they are lavish in their unmerited Encomiums; they advance them above others, by comparing their different Conditions, as if the Preferment bestow'd the Merit, or that bad Fortune debas'd a Man beneath himself.

Whence is it that *Alcippus* will not pretend to know *Brutus*, who is just displac'd? He cajoled him in his Prosperity, and carried his Deference and Respects even to Adoration. At present he scarce vouchsafes to speak to him; he shuns him where-ever he meets him, as if there was something of Infection in his Person. Should *Brutus* come again in play, *Alcippus* would have the same Regard for him as before.

The Benefactions People wait to make in their last Wills, are very insignificant: If they think thereby to obtain the Reputation of Liberality, they ought to know it is too late to give, when they are no longer capable of enjoying. The most fordid at that Season do themselves a Credit with the Money they are forc'd to part with, but which they would be overjoyed to be able to bury along with them. 'Tis a dangerous thing to divulge the Circumstances of a Man's Will, and the Legacies bequeath'd to this and that: This is a Liberality that has often been ill recom-

recompenc'd. The Legatee sometimes grows out of Patience, at the too long Life of the Testator, and the Greediness of Succession makes the Heir precipitate the Days of him whose Death instates him in a plentiful way of living; much like that Emperor who caused those to be strangled who gave him any thing by their Testament; for if they recovered he sent his Guards to assassinate them in their Houses.

Few People have Souls so great and noble as not to love to receive. I would have an honest Man to be more reserv'd in that Particular, and to receive no Favours above the power of Acknowledgment equal to the Benefit: The Giver ought to have very different Considerations, and to expect no Return for the Kindnesses he does; this would not be Liberality, but a kind of mercenary Traffick, disguised under specious Names.

Numbers of People think they are quit for the good Offices that are done them, by referring the Authors to their Wills, which is a Lure to the Expectations and Hopes of the interested Persons; but 'tis an uncertain and ambiguous way of shewing Kindness.

From the same Principle we forget at once good Offices and Affronts, viz. the *Tedium* of being always under the same Disposition of Mind. We are tired with perpetual Gratitude, and perpetual Hatred. *Ariana* is reconciled to *Justina*, not from any religious Motive, or Return of Affection to her, her Animosity being still the same; but be-

200 *Reflections upon* Ridicule.

cause she's tir'd with acting the Part of a declared Enemy.

For People obscurely born to have Sentiments suitable to the Meanness of their Extraction, is no great Wonder, this being but the Fruits of their ill Education; but 'tis another thing for you, *Eleagenes*, that descend from one of the most illustrious Families in *Europe*, to bely the Nobility of your Blood by your Actions. You are fond of Gaming, and you play foul; you borrow Money, and never pay; your Domesticks dread you as a Tyrant, and constantly feel the Weight of your Blows; you never open your Mouth but to throw out Impertinencies and Follies; your Discourses favour of the Places you frequent, and are Testimonies of the Baseness of your Sentiments; you are civil to no body, but give an equal Treatment to a Woman of Quality, and her Chamber-Maid.

'Tis very hard to be a great Gamester and a worthy Man at once: Your Gamesters are easily provoked; they are brutal and passionate; they are ill Paymasters when they lose, but rigorous Creditors when they win: They are in continual Mistrusts and Apprehensions of being cheated. A great Estate lost is a great Temptation to Fraud and Knavery.

Dealing in Law-Suits is, in my Opinion, that which of all Things most warps the Mind, and soonest corrupts Integrity; it is, as I may say, the Triumph of Interest and
Ava-

Avarice. A Man embarks in Law at first with a Principle of Justice, which would have every one preserve what of Right belongs to him; but when once the Action is commenc'd, it's made a Point of Honour to maintain it: If your Adversary plays you a Trick, you think there is no Injustice in Reprisals, and you play him another: If your Plot takes, and you gain any Advantage over him by your Stratagem, you are emboldened by the Success, and you go on; and after a Contest of many Years, 'tis found, in the Conclusion of the Trial, that you have lost your Estate, your Honesty, your good Sentiments, Integrity, Honour and Conscience.

Clito, to excuse his Stinginess and sordid Avarice, alledges the Baseness of the Times; if he gives a Dinner, he harangues upon the Dearthness of Provisions, and seems to grudge his Guests every Bit they eat, and Glass of Wine they drink. He daily finds out some new Maxim of Frugality; he retrenches the Number of his Servants or their Wages, and would have them serve, as they say, for a Song. But what they abate him on one hand, they make up to themselves on the other; for they never leave him but they rob him.

Considering the Make and Complexion of Men, 'tis in vain to spur them with Notions of Generosity, to engage them to declare for us. We must let them see their Account in the Advances we would have them make, and convince them that we are not useless Crea-

202 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

tures. Interest is the only Spring that can put them in Motion; 'tis Hope, and not Pity, that is the Passion they are troubled with, whilst, being insensible to others Misfortunes, they only commiserate themselves.

They that fondly imagine they are beloved, and attribute the Attendances that are given them to their own Merit, are much mistaken. Those very Persons that are so officious, and express so disinterested a Zeal, will sacrifice them to the first Gust of Fortune that blows from the other Quarter. This is the Frame and Composition of Mankind, and he mistakes them who judges otherwise. They love themselves preferably to all the World, and if they love any thing besides, 'tis only as a Corollary of this first Principle.

Some People entitle a scandalous Parsimony good Husbandry: Intent upon Gain, they are wonderful ingenious in turning all their Savings to Advantage, whilst they deny themselves the Things they most desire. Every thing smells of this sordid Humour, their Retinue, their Equipage, their Habits, and their Tables. If they give a Treat, they can't help shewing their Regret and Uneasiness at the Cost, and something is always wanting in it; the Guests in the mean time depart less satisfied with their Entertainment, than disgusted with so ill-plac'd and mistaken a Frugality.

Hesione has fifteen hundred Pounds a Year; she loves Play and Company at her Heart, but she loves Money better, and therefore she
ab-

abstains from both for fear of Expences. She spends her whole Life in a continued Constraint, refusing herself what she hath the greatest Passion for, because she won't be at a Penny Charge. She turns her Cloaths, and makes them up in five or six different Fashions, before she sells them to the Brokers. We pardon *Hesione* her Stinginess, because she is sufficiently punish'd by the want of all those Pleasures she denies herself; but that which is unpardonable is her scandalous Practice of getting Money by indirect Ways, and unworthy a Woman of Quality.

How should we despise the Covetous, could we discover all those Tricks they play, and Artifices they employ, to heap up Wealth! How they trample under Foot, Laws, Justice, and Equity, and every thing that's sacred! How Money obtains the place in their Esteem, of Friends, Relations, and their God! All their Business in the World is to enrich themselves, and torment their Debtors.

He that has but a little Fortune, and a violent Desire to be rich, is very seldom an honest Man. An indifferent Probity can't stand against this Temptation. If such a Conjunction happens, as without risking his Reputation, he is in a way to get Riches, by swerving a little from an exact Integrity; his Virtue runs great Hazards: They are only Men of noble and refin'd Sentiments, that don't forget themselves on such Occasions.

All the Ways of growing rich are equal to Souls greedy of Gain; whilst Men of Honesty
will

204. *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

will not amass Riches by unlawful Means; which is the Reason that Men of Honour and Integrity seldom make any great Fortune. I am far from envying those People that are opulent and rich at the Cost of their Equity and Conscience. He is rich enough who has nothing to reproach himself. What Quiet or Satisfaction is to be enjoy'd in Life, after the Commission of so many base and unjust Actions? Could we believe it unless we saw it, that Persons of Quality, who ought to have Sentiments above the Vulgar, should be guilty of so many base Actions through a Spirit of Interest. They retrench their Servants Wages, and dismiss them without paying them: They ruin all those that furnish the Provisions of their Table. The Mercer and the Coalman are no better used than others. They infinitely caress an easy Creditor, to wheedle him out of his Money, and declare themselves his Enemies when they have obtain'd the Sum desir'd. There's no Tricks but they recur to, to prevent paying both Interest and Principal; but at last an entire Ruin of their Family is the just Fruit of so much Baseness.

Love of Gaming quickly corrupts the best Principles in the World; thousands that are just in every thing else, make no scruple to cheat at Play: They consider themselves as in the Enemy's Country, and think that Rooking is a kind of lawful Profession. Is this the lawful Plunder of War? Or is it not Robbery by Arts and Subtilties at play to guard against the Freaks of Fortune?

'Tis

'Tis a criminal Practice for People to spend more than they have: They borrow Money on all Hands, to maintain the Magnificence of their Train and Table. The Publick, which sees them wallow in Wealth, believes them happy: but they themselves feel the Uneasiness of that borrowed State, which undermines them, and at last will prove their total Ruin.

What ought we to think of those that borrow with design never to pay? Who abuse the Simplicity of their Creditors, that lend them with an honest Meaning, not dreaming of the Trap they lay for them. But when they have amass'd great Sums, and have secur'd their Effects, they desert them, and leave them in terrible Alarms. These have no way but to come to Composition, and lose one half of the Debt to save the rest, whilst the others, after these infamous Practices, have the Face to appear, and make parade of the Riches they have gotten by their Rogueries; and the World suffers them, instead of shunning them as the Plague.

'Tis an Imprudence to enter into Correspondences and Confidences with People without knowing them; for the covetous are no ways fit for Society or Secrecy. A Man under the Power of Interest has always a Gate open to his Heart, to surrender to the Charms of Gold. The Glitter of it blinds and seduces him, and when he is once corrupted, he makes no Difficulty of sacrificing both Friends and Friendships to his Interest.

It

206 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

It is a very hard thing to live long in good Intelligence with People of contrary Parties, who have great Interests to contest: What Address does it not require to carry it in such a Manner, as to testify an equal Affection, without declaring for one or other: The Poise is so very nice that the Balance most easily inclines: In endeavouring to keep them, we make Enemies of them both. On these Occasions there's need of great Sincerity, and a clear Procedure: A shuffling Conduct throws us into great Difficulties, and exposes us to great Reproaches.

Where is there to be found a faithful, sincere, discreet, judicious and disinterested Friend, who has the Assurance to admonish us of our Faults, and fears not our Displeasure in giving us wholesome Counsel? We commonly are the last to know what is said of us; in which our Delicacy is unconceivable, it going for an Affront to be told of the Reports that are spread to our Disgrace. Our Friends are, for the most part, timorous or interested; and they chuse rather to abandon us to an ill Conduct, than venture to displease us by opening our Eyes with sincere Advice. If *Clitlia*'s Friends had not dealt so gently with her, she had not disgrac'd herself as she has done: They had easily retrieved her from a growing Passion, in which she lightly engaged without foreseeing the Effects. Her Friends, that would not break with her, chose rather to leave her to her Engagement, than give her Counsels that might vex her, and exasperate

rate her against them; and thus she open'd not her Eyes till she fell into the Precipice. He that hazards an Advice, feels the Pulse to see how it's like to be receiv'd; if it be well taken, he pushes on his Point with a constant Zeal: But there are few so generous, as to risk the losing the Friendship of a Person they have any Dependance on, rather than see him make a false Step.

They that pretend to reform Abuses, don't always do it with a disinterested Motive, but commonly intermix the Spleen of their private Passions. Their Envy to a Man in a considerable Post, and his troublesome Authority, makes them sift his Conduct with a scrupulous Rigour. It is hard for any one to be so strict and regular as not to have some weak side, which gives an handle to Persons jealous of his Reputation: And when his Enemies have discover'd it, they clamour that all's undone, unless the Corruptions be redress'd; and never leave off bawling, till he's removed from his Post, in which they have the Art to place themselves, in Recompence for their hypocritical Zeal. No body would have thought of throwing *Cleon* out of his Place, and putting *Onaphrus* in, if the clandestine Ambition of the latter had not made him act all sorts of Parts, and taught him a thousand Stratagems to cast Jealousy and Suspicion upon the other's Conduct.

'Tis a base and fulsome Complaisance, to praise in publick what we blame in private; and we hereby expose ourselves to be thought

208 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

cowardly or interested Flatterers. If we have not the Courage to speak our Thoughts, the only Option is to be silent, and no ways signify our Applause of Impertinence.

They that think they have Heads politick enough to out-wit all the World, are commonly others Cullies. They resemble Sharppers who would cheat at Play: When their Tricks are discovered, they are turn'd upon them, and they are led into the Snares they laid. I know no better way to disappoint the Artifices of these politick Gentlemen, than to dissemble the Discovery of their ill Designs, who have pitch'd upon us for their *Dupes*.

Men are not excusable for their want of Civilities to the Ladies: But the Women are commonly the Cause of the little Respect that is paid them. If they were statelier, Men would be more submissive. Most of them are Mercenary and Half-witted; they have no Sincerity nor Honesty; they value not being affronted, provided they be treated and presented; nor do they care for being loved, the shew of it suffices them; having more Passion for the Money than the Man.

If our Grandmothers should return into the World, how would they be astonish'd to see the License, the Immodesty, the Debauchery, and Impudence of their Grandaughters! They had in those Days the same Passions, and Hearts as capable of Love as at present; but at least they observed Measures: They did not surrender at the first Attack of
their

their Lovers: They did not follow them to the Taverns, and make all the Advances: Their highest Favours were a long time a purchasing, and the Men weren't allowed to say they loved them till after a great deal of Pains and Assiduities. The Women of this Age complain of the Coldness and Indifference of their Lovers. Where would they have us lay the Fault? They are as amiable, as handsome, as witty as their Grandmothers, who kindled strong and lasting Passions. But how does a Woman turn the Stomach, be she never so handsome, when all the World knows the History of her Intrigues; and her Letters and Romance are the Amusement of the Pages and Footmen in the Antichamber.

'Tis the common Temptation of Women, to desire to be taken notice of. The Beauties need only shew themselves: Nature has been at the whole Cost for them. They that are not so well appointed with Charms, affect to have something glaring in their Habits, their Trimmings, their Equipage and their Behaviour: But they are out in their Reckoning, and mistake their real Interests. These borrowed Ornaments are a kind of Varnish, that make their native Uglinefs the more conspicuous: Less Notice would be taken of it, if this Finery did not provoke a spiteful Curiosity, which takes the Woman to pieces, and separates all that is of Art from all that is of Nature.

The Passion certain Women have for Play, and infinite things as ruinous, is not to be con-

210 *Reflections upon* Ridicule.

conceived. What is it they will not do to have Money? What Practices and Artifices have they not Recourse to? They buy Jewels on Tick of the most rigorous Usurers, and afterwards sell them a good Penny-worth. Some we see that clear their Houses of all their Furniture, and pawn their very Necessaries, Plate, Cloaths and Linnen, and continue in these Disorders for little Debts, by reason of their Incapacity to retrieve them at the Time prefix'd by these Leeches, who only lend upon those burdensome Conditions. The Stupidity of the Husbands is another thing as unaccountable: They either perceive not these Disorders that ruin their Affairs, or, by a stupid Supineness, are with-held from assuming the Ascendant over their lunatick Wives, who are only guided by their Passions.

Men are not much wiser in this than Women: It seems that the Love of Play distracts them, and deprives them of their Senses; who are neither cured by Experience nor Misfortunes: Having long groaned under their Losses, they embark again on a new Bottom, and expose themselves to fresh Dangers and Discontents. *Corbini*, enraged with losing all his Money, stak'd his Coach and Horses, his Coachman and Footmen; he lost them all, and so return'd home on Foot without either Money or Servants.

Betisi is so complaisant to sit up all Night to see his Wife play at *Lansquenet*: And he punctually pays every Morning the Sums she has lost upon Honour. He is so fearful she should

should be a Moment uneasy, that he is the first to make the Matches for the Amusement of his Wife, who knows well how to make her Markets of her Husband's Folly. If this Trade lasts but six Months longer, he'll find himself reduc'd to an Hospital, and will not have a Shirt left; tho' his Father, who many Years handled the Revenues, left him great Riches when he died.

What's the Meaning, that Men, whose Essence consists in Reason, so little follow its Conduct, and live by Freak and Caprice? They launch into extravagant Mirth, or fall into a gloomy Melancholy without knowing the Reason why; and that which they should most desire, is that which most offends them. *Arnolfe* has been at Law this thirty Years for an insignificant Estate, of a dubious and litigious Title: To this Affair he sacrifices the Repose of his Life and Conscience: He spends his clearest Rents upon it, and denies himself Things necessary, to be able to maintain the Expences of this Suit. He has been cast already in four Courts, but he daily says he will try it till his Death, and will sell all his Lands to have this one or two, which is wrongfully disputed him.

Time out of Mind, the People have been expos'd to the unjust Oppression of the great and rich; but 'tis abominable, that Persons eminent for their Quality and Riches, should fly to unjust Methods, and a tyrannical Authority to oppress the miserable, who have nothing to oppose but their impotent Tears, where-

212 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

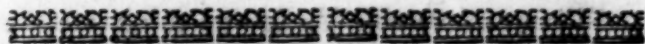
wherewith these unrelenting Men are not affected : It would be but an imperfect Pleasure to them to be Masters, unless they made the Weight of their Power and Dominion felt. Is it so great an Happiness to give Terror and Groans to the miserable, that Men will buy it at the Expence of their Conscience and Honour, and the Repose of all that are under them.

When a Man is grown Rich by his Industry, no body examines what Means he used ; he the Engines never so base, which he play'd to raise his Fortune, 'tis all forgotten, and only remembred that he's Rich, and may be serviceable in his Person or Money, and capable of being a Friend to those who are of his Acquaintance. Hence Persons of Quality stoop to court his Friendship and Alliance : Was ever such Degeneracy and Meanness !

Cesenes continually declaim'd against the Publicans and Farmers ; and it was always in his Mouth that these Leeches ought to be banish'd the Republick, who fatten upon the Blood of the People : That honest Families, which had their Riches by Inheritance, ought not to match with those establish'd upon the Ruins and Spoils of the Publick, because an ill-gotten Estate dissolves like Salt in Water. *Cesenes* grew a Romish Votary, and his Aversion to this Vermin was heighten'd much since his profess'd Devotion : But a Week ago he married *Romond's* Daughter, who is engaged in all the great Farms of *France*.

Great

Great Riches are a Covering for all Faults, and give a Relief to Merit, though never so small. But 'tis wonderful that they can soder up the Reputation of a Man who is enrich'd by Roguery, and whose Cheats are publick. Every body knows that *Agenor* got his Estate by Play: As long as he gam'd he was looked on as a Rogue; and he run himself into a thousand Troubles by his Tricks and Sharping. He was often caught in the Fact, and obliged to restore the Money he had basely won, and was infamous to a Proverb. Grown Rich by these scandalous Practices, he is respected, honoured and courted; *Florantes*, the worthiest Man in Town, of a known Probity, and unblemish'd Reputation, courts *Agenor's* Daughter, as if he meant to marry all his Rogueries: What an Age is this!



Of Sufficiency.

THIS Fault results from the Persuasion that we have eminent Qualities. This Persuasion is sometimes founded upon the Truth, and then that Sufficiency seems excusable; sometimes it is the Effect of a ridiculous Presumption, and in that Case it disgusts all Mankind. For there is nothing so impertinent and intolerable as a Fool that takes upon him.

him. A Man puffed up with the Opinion of his own Merit, is never put out of Countenance: He talks loud in all Companies; he has an Assurance in his Face, which shews how well satisfy'd he is with himself: The least Trifles that he speaks, he utters with an Air of Confidence, being convinc'd that he is heard with Pleasure: These bold Appearances impose upon the inconsiderate, and carry away the Suffrages of Fools. A modest Man, who says excellent Things in a modest Way, is only admir'd by rational People. But it requires Art to recommend one to the Multitude.

Modesty is an infallible Sign of an extraordinary Merit, whereas the Complacency in their own Merit, is a great Presumption against these Self-flatterers; they know not what true Merit is, and they take up with the glimmering Resemblance.

'Tis an intolerable Vanity to think we are very deserving, and the Republick can't subsist without our Services. Look upon it as Favour when you are employ'd, and capacitated to shew your Talents; but think that your Post might have been fill'd by a thousand better qualify'd than your self. It is rare to see People content with their Employments, though never so Honourable, they think they deserve still more considerable. They parallel themselves with those in the highest Stations, and say to themselves they are as good, and they must have some Remains of Modesty not to think that they excel them.

All

All Men are blind in Point of their own Merit and *Dupes* to themselves. For this Reason they are so well satisfied with indifferent Talents, and envy not those of others.

No body does himself Justice, nor knows precisely his own Dimensions; if he has any good Quality, he congratulates himself, and endeavours always to shew himself upon that Side. If he be obliged to acknowledge some Imperfections, he places them in a Point of View; which makes them almost imperceptible: But at the same time heightens the least Defects of others. To judge rightly of our Vices, we must compare with those that have the same, without being more indulgent to our selves than we are to others.

Whatever little Merit a Man has, he frankly compares himself to the most accomplish'd Persons. Is he so blind? Has he so bad a Judgment? Or is it to dazzle and impose upon others? *Clearchus*, the second Copy of Verses he wrote, ask'd some of his Friends whether his Piece had not the Spirit of those of Mr. *Addison*? Whether the Thoughts, the Turn of the Expression, had not something of an Original? How many of the same Temper are there in the World? If they don't declare themselves so rashly, if some remaining Modesty hinders them from speaking aloud, that they deserve to be ranked amongst the sublimest Genius's, they whisper it to themselves,

216 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

selves, and are pleasingly intoxicated with so kind and flattering a Deception.

A Man that too manifestly signifies his good Opinion of his own Merit, sets all the World against him. The most certain and ready way to deserve the Esteem of Men, is to appear modest, and not insatuated with one's self. The Vain and Sufficient draw upon them Envy, Contempt and Obloquy, and are the common Mark for Satire and Raillery, instead of meriting the Approbation which they seek. *Argenia* ask'd the other Day why the Women could not bear her, and what Reason they had to inveigh so horribly against her? *Argenia* has a great Share of Wit, but that's not the thing that provokes the Women's Emulation most; she is but indifferent handsome, and her Fortune is pretty equally match'd with her Beauty; so that in this Combination there's nothing to provoke the Women's Envy; and yet they'll pardon nothing in *Argenia*, but decry her all they can: The Reason is, she is Haughty and Presumptuous, full of the Notion of her own Merit; she thinks to eclipse the rest of her Sex, and too visibly discovers her Contempt of them.

Thousands of People think they are applauded in Places where they are only considered as Coxcombs, and are only suffered purely for Diversion; they are given out beforehand as the Comedy to be acted, and all the Company is prepared to put their Question to them in their Turn. *Philautes* every
where

where declares how welcome he is to *Cleonice*, who ne'er mentions him but as a Fool. *Philantes* is so blinded with the great Opinion of his admirable Merits, as not to distinguish Irony and satirical Praise from sincere and unaffected Commendation. Because he has good Hair, and a very white Skin, and keeps a nice Table, he thinks himself the Phœnix of his Age. He surfeits all People with his Sufficiency, and is the Property of his Flatterers and Parasites.

You think yourself a very necessary Man, and of great Importance, and that is your Folly: Don't flatter yourself that you are so much as necessary to your Friends or Family; they look upon you as a lazy Body, whom they would gladly be rid of: Whatever Merit or Talent we think we have, we have still some weak Part to balance our good Qualities.

To avoid the Ridicule of this Sufficiency, let us reflect upon our Insignificancy in the World: Of what Use to the Publick are these rare Talents which we are so extremely fond of? We live for ourselves, or a little handful of People about us, and when we go off the Stage our Loss makes no *Vacuum* in Nature, and no body perceives it: They that ought to be most concern'd, impatiently expect the Moment that frees them from Dependence. Such an one believes his Death will occasion a great Desolation in his Family, which joyfully defrays the Expences of his Funeral.

L

What

218 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

What Extravagancies are daily committed by vain Creatures, fondly conceited of their own Merit? What Complacency they take in every thing they say, believing that all good Sense is included in their own Brain! With what Disdain do they reject what others say, as if they were Trifles not worth Attention? With what a magisterial Tone do they impose Silence on the Company? With what Arrogance and Assurance do they utter their Fooleries and trivial Things, which every Body's Ears are tired with? With what Presumption do they court, in the Eyes and Looks of Hearers, those Applauses which all the World refuses them?

The great Idea we have of our own Merit, disquiets us to consider the Merit of others; we take no Pleasure in hearing them praised, but are tortured with the Reflexions we make upon their good Qualities: 'Tis the Weakness of Women, who can't bear Rivalship in any thing whatever. A Woman brim-full with the Notion of her Beauty, is put beside herself to hear another's Beauty celebrated, and therefore they that fall upon this Subject must be very circumspect; they are always in fear of being eclipsed, and when any Disgrace happens to them in this Matter, they are never able to recover it.

If any one fails to give you all the Praises you think you deserve, don't discover any Symptoms of Resentment; artfully dissemble your Discontent, conceal, under the Shew of an easy Countenance, the secret Grief that

preys upon your Soul, and take heed of making others merry at your Cost; for probably your Sorrow would afford them a malicious Joy.

Haughty People have continually a thousand Mortifications to submit to; the least Sign of Contempt, a Wink, or a Smile, where nothing is clandestinely design'd, suffices to distract them: They depart sad and disquieted from the Company where no body meant to disturb them. They are always persuaded that one or other has fail'd in some Point of that infinite Respect which is due to their Merit. People of this Character must never reckon upon their Repose; for Men are not always in a Humour to sooth them, but are ill-natur'd enough to attack them frequently upon this Chapter, when they have found out their blind Side.

You have resolv'd upon it, and nothing will satisfy you but that important Place: Alas! you are not fit for it; your Vanity misguides you: That Employment requires a greater Stock of Learning and Parts than you can boast of, though the fond Opinion of yourself possesses you with different Notions: You are naturally loose and libertine, and can't subdue yourself; that Place demands Affiduity and Pains, to discharge the Duties of it with Honour. You don't reflect that your Estate is as mean as your Capacity, which must hereby be lost; that to purchase that Place you would streighten yourself for ever, and be ruin'd past Recovery. Be wise

220 *Reflections upon* Ridicule.

at the Expence of others; observe *Meret's* shatter'd Circumstances, he carries his Aims too high, and could not live at the Rate requir'd by the Post he was plac'd in, contrary to his Friends Advice. He was forc'd to sell the Place he was so ambitious of, after it had swallowed up the greatest part of his Estate; this Fall strangely mortifies his Vanity, but it's no longer time to make Reflexions, when a Man is ruin'd beyond Retrieval.

Your Vanity or Disquiet can't bear with People that are above you, and you carry your Censures even up to the first Ministers, and all in place. One would think in hearing your Decisions upon the Government, that you were to answer for it to the World, and that you were to be rais'd from your Obscurity to the first Employs of State. Get rid of that foolish Presumption, keep fair with those that are above you by their Birth or Station, however, without descending to servile Complaisances.

Why do you undertake for an Affair above your Capacity? You would have had nothing to answer for unless you had promised the Event in so positive a Strain: If it miscarries, whom would you have us lay the Fault on?

The Excess of Credulity, which is a natural Consequence of Sufficiency, makes us the Mark for the Artillery of Impostors, and the Railleries of Drolls, who know our Weakness. The vain and sufficient too lightly believe the obliging Things that are said to them, in
pure

pure Complaisance. A Woman that sets up for Beauty, when she is praised upon that Topic, receives the Compliments that are paid her, as an Homage to her Merit, without examining whether she be flatter'd. 'Tis the same with a Man in point of Wit; we ought not to be so credulous and easy: Most Men's Life is nothing else but a Commerce of Compliments and Flattery, to ridicule one another. *Melina* is sufficiently handsome, but it is not sufficient for her Vanity to be moderately praised; nothing but Hyperboles can please her: She is satisfied, and believes you when you tell her she excels all other Women. This Presumption hinders her from perceiving the malicious Ironies of those who seem to praise her, and laugh at her ridiculous Prepossession.

Our Attention to observe the Faults of others, is a delicate Piece of Vanity, to indemnify us of the Reproaches others make, or we make ourselves, in Spite of the Presumption inspired by the Idea of our great Qualities. We are in some manner comforted for our own Faults, when we see others subject to the same.

We live in an Age wherein every body has Wit; it is difficult to distinguish yourself that Way: You are mistaken in thinking you much oblige others by having a little more Art than they. Make no Pretensions to any thing, nor, above all, affect the Reputation of a Wit. There is something of ridiculous adhering to that Character I know not how:

222 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

'Tis indeed very odd, but as odd and ungrateful as that Prejudice is, 'tis hard for a Man that sets up for a Wit, to avoid Ridicule. Observe *Florion* and all his Grimaces when he is praised; see how he bristles: His Friends have spoiled him, by telling him too often he has Wit; and since he has publish'd a Book, he does not know himself, nor on what Ground he stands. Bless us! is it so wonderful a thing to write a Book? Does the Name of an Author so exalt the Merit of an honest Man? Come down, *Florion*, to your Equals; mistrust the ironical Praises that are given you: You have always your Book in your Hand, to read the fine Places to your Visitants, who are amazed at the Applauses you bestow upon yourself.

'Tis not for want of Parts, if *Philip* has not the Knack of pleasing in Conversation; he speaks good Things enough, but he is too full of himself, and will not wait till he is applauded, but is his own Commender. He talks in too free and familiar a way, to those he does not know, and who have never seen him before.

'Tis Pride or Stupidity not to approve what deserves Approbation, and to affect an Indifference to things surprizing and extraordinary. 'Tis not the Way to be esteem'd, to express Contempt of meritorious Works, which have the general Vogue. That false Delicacy makes Authors commonly ridiculous. It puts them upon the Rack to hear any thing approv'd but what they have done.

A Book that meets with a Character and Success, throws them in Despair; they make Confederacies offensive and defensive to decry it, and brutally fall upon those that do Justice to the Author and his Piece. But who can forbear laughing to hear them assert in a dogmatick Manner, that nothing was ever more wretchedly perform'd?

Ill Fortune is advantageous to some People, as teaching them the Art of Living. *Belisan* was uncivil, proud, and insolent, whilst his Father flourish'd; he scarce saluted Persons of the first Rank, but made them long wait and dance Attendance in the Antechamber: Since his Father is disgrac'd, he is grown polite and courteous, and prevents every body in good Breeding. He has gain'd by the Loss of his Fortune. He was slighted and avoided before, now he is pitied and caressed.

We must bear with those that are above us, 'tis the Punishment of Dependance; but we must bear without Dastardy and Baseness. Persons of an inferior Rank may come up to a Level with others, by the Greatness of their Souls; whereas the Great degrade themselves from their Authority, by abusing it, and pressing too hard upon those below them, who leave no Stone unturn'd to shake off so troublesome a Yoke.

'Tis certain that an high Birth gives great Privileges, and a great Ascendant over those of a lower Rank: We pardon Persons of Quality, for their Rank sake, a thousand Things which would not be borne in others; but that

224 *Reflections upon* Ridicule.

Deference we pay them, ought to render them less proud and haughty, and less addicted to little Formalities. Let them not think they are privileged to say and do every thing. The silly Things that escape them are more remarkable than in obscurer Persons.

The Easiness and Complaisance the World expresses to believe the eminent Descent of certain Persons, cherishes and coddles them in so gentle an Error. How many Women of obscure Extraction, by marrying Husbands of no Birth, but rich, would be consider'd as Women of Quality, because their Friends, to flatter them, indulge them in that Notion, and pay the same Deference to their Wealth, as is due to real Merit?

The Flatteries and blind Complaisancies of Mothers to their Daughters, often possess them with a ridiculous Pride, which but little comports with well-bred Ladies, corrupts their good Nature, and fills their Heads with a thousand romantick and extravagant Ideas. *Celiana* has often been told that she is handsome, and amiable, and rich, and that there is no Match above her Merit; which she is so fully persuaded of, that all the Husbands that are offer'd meet with nothing but Affronts and Slights, by reason of her pretended Inequality. She'll die a Maid, or will never be cured of her Prejudice, till she is out of Date for Matrimony.

If you praise one Woman's Beauty before another, she casts her Thoughts on what is most

most commendable in herself, to compare it with what is least handsome in the other, which Comparifon naturally inclines her to determine in Favour of herself. Men use the same Artifices to give themselves the Preference in Wit; they attentively observe the weak Part of their Competitors, and behold themselves on their advantagious Side: 'Tis the Distemper of indifferent Authors and Poets, who think to set off themselves by censuring others Works.

Women are impatient of being rival'd in any thing whatever, and commonly hate each other on the most whimsical Occasions; it not being always Competition, or the same Pretensions, that imbitter them, and sharpen their Satires to one another's Ruin. It is very rare to see Women of any Merit regard each other with a kind Eye, when they meet in any Company; they examine one another with an envious Curiosity, and make no Allowances: Scarce can they hinder their Indignation from breaking through their studied and forced Compliments. She must be something more than Woman that can hear, without Jealousy, the Praises given another. *Florinna* is the only Person that loves to hear others commended for their Beauty, and Charms, and Carriage; she is the first to speak well of them, and defend them when they are attack'd. This Generosity is an infallible Sign of *Florinna's* Merit.

Does any one think his Merit the greater for vilifying his Rivals? Does he imagine it

226 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

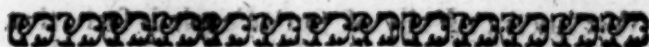
gives him an Air of Distinction, and Authority to regard others with an Air of Contempt? 'Tis quite mistaking his Interests, to assume the Pre-eminence above all the World by these fastidious Ways. The interested make Leagues and Cabals to oppose their Tyranny, and ruin the Foundations of that chimerical Empire.

Persons that are conscious of any Merit, are jealous of a Superiority, and can't bear Competitors; it puts them out of all Temper to hear others praised before them who have the same Talents. How enraged is a Woman, unless she has great Sense, to see one touch'd with another's Beauty? 'Tis not enough to be handsome, unless they be handsomer than every body else.

How many good Qualities soever a Man wants, and miserable he appears, he is not miserable in all Respects; he has still something or other not so distasteful, and that something or other contents him. We should be utterly disconsolate, if we had nothing that was agreeable; but our Comfort is, that we are not deficient in every thing: We are always very ingenious to deceive ourselves, considering our best Sides, and shewing only them; but instead of gaining the Esteem of the World by these fond Complacencies in ourselves, we grow ridiculous by our over-affecting to appear what we are not, and being too sedulous in hiding those Faults which fly in People's Eyes.

I can't

I can't bear the foolish Sufficiency of those pretended Politicians who are criticizing every thing, and pretend to foresee all Events; who frame to themselves a chimerical System of the Way they would have the World govern'd: Nor the Impertinencies of those vain Heads that idolize all their own Imaginations; that entrust you with the most frivolous Trifles as mighty Secrets, and talk in a mysterious Tone. Do you hear, says *Beralus* in addressing you, the great News? But this News which he utters with so great Wariness and Caution, is nothing but his own Dream. What I tell you, says he, is a Secret I commit to you alone; 'tis a thing that ought to be buried. But his Impatience to leave you proceeds only from his Itch to communicate the same Secret to all that will give him the hearing.



Of Absurdities.

OUR want of Application to consider the Conjectures, and different Posture, and Face of Affairs, of Times and Occasions, of the Characters of Persons, their Interests, Motions, Passions and Engagements; this want of Application makes us guilty of a great

228 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

great many Absurdities in the Commerce of civil Life. Mistaking Times and Seasons, is, perhaps, a thing the most to be avoided, as rendering People most troublesome and ridiculous; there's nothing more formidable than those Persons that distinguish not your Leisure from your Times of Business, that accost you in a supine Manner to intrust you with importunate Trifles, at a Time that your serious and earnest Affairs call you another way, and resent it, if you any ways signify your Necessity of leaving them, though they have nothing to tell you.

Such as are not always Masters of their Passion, should at least constrain themselves before People, and not seek Witnesses of their Extravagancies; 'tis ridiculous enough to be govern'd by Rage at Home, without opening Scenes for the Publick, which loves to divert itself with others Follies. The Faults we commit without Witnesses, are more pardonable. But the Weakness or Folly of some People is such, that they exactly chuse the Time to act their Extravagancies, when the Concourse is greatest, as if they wanted a numerous Evidence to their Madness. It seems that the Crowd irritates them the more, and throws them out of their natural Biass. To avoid this Part of Ridicule, we ought to consider in cold Blood how contemptible a Man grows by his continual Transports, and how much we suffer from those that are guilty of them in our Presence.

Cela.

Concerning Absurdities. 229

Celanor's Table is always well spread, and his Entertainments genteel, and well dress'd. But if his Cook has happen'd to over or under season a *Ragoo*, he falls into a Passion that's next kind to Distraction. His Vexation, his Oaths and Reprimands, last all the Dinner. There's no room for his Friends to talk or be merry: He must harangue his Servants one after another, whilst his Victuals in his Mouth are ready to choak him. He has lost all Command of himself, and seems to be mad, and to have lost all his Senses.

When People are afflicted and embarrass'd with Troubles that demand speedy Succours, 'tis no time to moralize and dictate grave Sentences. We must put ourselves in Action, and find out the shortest Ways to draw them from the Mire. You go to wait on *Celidan*; you tell him that you are persecuted with a troublesome Creditor that keeps your Nose to the grinding Stone, and reduces you to the last Extremities. *Celidan* makes you a long Discourse upon the Ill-nature and Cruelty of Men; which moral Lecture is out of its place. *Celidan* is rich, and might, without any Inconvenience, lend you a Sum to clear you of your Difficulties, which would be of greater Use to you, than this unseasonable Harangue you are vexed to hear.

You teize a Man with Compliments and Questions, who is not at leisure to hear you: Could you not read in his uneasy Face his Eagerness to leave you? He gives you only short and slight Answers, suffer him to go,
and

230 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

and make way for him to retire with Decency, and without thinking you importunate and impertinent: Your sedate Looks vex him, and put him out of Patience.

'Tis playing the Pedant unseasonably to critick things which indeed deserve Censure, but of which your Opinion was not ask'd, or if it was, with Design only to be flatter'd. Attend patiently to the End of a bad Piece, and neither in your Mien or Gestures express your Dislike, or rather your secret Pride, which makes you set up for a good Judge. Keep your Knowledge to yourself, since no body is inclin'd to profit by it; and don't be reputed in the World as a severe and inexorable Critick.

As the best things are spoil'd by Excess and over-doing, so Actions mis-tim'd lose their Value, which would do us honour if they were better husbanded. We see abundance of People that are officiously civil, always ready to do us a Pleasure; but they do it with too much Forwardness or Affectation; they render themselves importunate by their Diligence. The Virtues themselves require to be well season'd and retrench'd from all their Superfluities. The Way is to be officious without Eagerness and Affectation, obliging without Uneasiness, complaisant without Meanness, and a servile Devotion.

Women that have loved Gallantry, can't resolve to leave the World: It still is pleasing to them when they can no longer please. 'Tis strangely ridiculous to expose their faded and wrinkled

wrinkled Faces in Places where they used to appear, with such a Figure. 'Tis especially for them this Maxim was design'd, *That the end of Agreements ought to be the beginning of Retreat.* Be this Devotion our Politicks, Decency requires that they forbear to appear in the World, when it no longer beholds them with the same Eyes, and they give it Disgust who formerly gave it so much Pleasure.

'Tis a thing that provokes Laughter to see toothless, decrepit Women equally fond of all sorts of Pleasure as when they were but twenty; to see them mark all the Cadences with their Hands and Head, when the young ones dance; to beat time in Consort, and make passionate Exclamations when an Air affects them. *Florinda*, who is fourscore, never fails to be one at an Affignation or a Feast, or a Ball that's given in the Town: She manifests an extravagant Fondness for these Things. Would not the Decency of her Age require a little more Moderation? Or if she has so great a Relish for these Fooleries, should she not conceal her Passion to avoid falling into Ridicule?

Herstilia has been often told that she ought decently to retire; and has receiv'd Mortifications sufficient to discourage her, had she been sensible of her Reputation: But she has still the Misfortune to love the Places where she has been adored, tho' at present she gives nothing but Disturbance by the sight of her. She thinks that her superannuated Charms and twinkling Star-light of her Eyes, are still
able

232 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

able to make Conquests. 'Tis the Dotage of all Women that have been handsome, tho' their Body is changed, their Mind continues the same: They have still the same Passions and the same Desires of Pleasure, when the World has no longer liking to them. If they were wise, they would give place to those who begin to appear in the Scenes, and deny them the Pleasure of insulting them upon the Ruins of their Beauty.

There are a sort of incompilant People that are all of a Piece, who can't suit themselves to the different Seasons and Conjunctures, who are facetious and merry in the Company of grave Persons who talk of serious Affairs; on the contrary, they are gloomy and melancholick in Places of Joy and Gaiety. We are unwelcome to others, when we don't enter into their Humour, and divine the exact Situation of their Minds. Don't go to disturb others Repose: Stay at home, if your Disquiet or Ill-humour incapacitates you to contribute to their innocent Pleasures. If your Friends have met with any Misfortune, take heed how you indulge to your Mirth and Humour; that is not the Season of saying pretty things; it would be the Means to exasperate their Grief, and provoke them against you, instead of giving them any Comfort.

The Mind has its certain Moments of Disgust and Languor, wherein it can imagine and produce nothing that's agreeable. When 'tis benighted with these dark Images, let it be others Business to quicken Conversation,
and

and divert the Company. The things we offer as facetious and ingenious, but are not to seem insipid and distastful.

If you speak often of your self, you'll infallibly disgust. Self-Love suffers in hearing others prais'd, because their Elogies exalt him they are bestowed on, and depress others in some measure. This is a violent State, and you provoke the Spleen of those you keep in so painful a Posture. 'Tis also a certain Way of tiring, to speak long and often of your own Affairs, your Gains and Losses, your Pleasures and Misfortunes. What is it to those who know you but little, to be teized with the Account of a thousand Impertinencies, which you think Things of Consequence?

People that want Brains have always the most Tongue; as if they were apprehensive their Stupidity would not be soon enough perceiv'd, which might be conceal'd under a prudent and mysterious Silence. They talk with this Assurance, as believing what they say is witty and poignant, and that they gain the Esteem of the Persons they talk to, who are equally offended with their Folly and Presumption.

'Tis absurd to hear a Man with a merry Look, who talks to you of his Misfortunes; if they don't move you so much as he desires, you can't at least refuse to hear him with a composed Deportment, and the Seriousness that Decency requires: Your inward Sentiments can't be read, but let your exterior give
Content.

234 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

Content. 'Tis additional Affliction, which is sometimes as cutting as the Misfortune itself, to see others consider it with a supine Indifference.

A Man always grows ridiculous by departing from his Character. *Sylvain* is naturally sad and heavy, he has a cloudy and sleepy Imagination, and yet he borrowed an apish and magotty Carriage, which no ways fits his Genius and his Temper; he tries at Humour in every thing he says and does, with which forc'd Mirth no body is diverted. *Sylvain*, with his artificial Merriment, is look'd upon as a very tiresome Fellow; he would displease less, if he did not desire to please so much.

We ought not to thrust ourselves into those Diversions and Appointments where our Companies are not desired; don't bring an importunate Face to disturb the Entertainment. The Presumption of your Deserts easily seduces you, and you are very loth to think that you are troublesome; you think yourself a Phœnix in the Company, and admired of all, who, in the mean time, wish you a thousand Miles off.

How useful would this Reflexion be to a vast many People! They fatigue the World with their Assiduities and Visits; they boast their Intimacies with such a Countess and such a Lady, who have twenty times denied them Admittance, and their Doors would be always shut to them, but that they are conquered by their Importunities. When *Cela-*
tine

time is told that *Beroald* is to wait on her; Good God! says she, who will deliver me from the Persecutions of this Fool? And yet he enters with a confident Look, and is no sooner seated but he monopolizes the Discourse; and having flutter'd a thousand Impertinencies, departs content, and tells it every where that he is *Celatine's* most particular Friend.

'Tis a very nice Affair to observe due Measures with People that have affronted you, when they are recovered from their Passion, and seek an Accommodation. If your Rapture has made no Noise in the World, you may, without more ado, grant them the Favour they demand: But if the Injury has been publick, you must use more Precaution, and expect Intreaties, by reason of the Consequences, without expressing too much Forwardness to be reconciled. 'Tis not for the offended Party to make the Advances, according to the Rules of the World; 'tis enough if he be in a Disposition to forgive, when the Author of the Offence is brought to acknowledge it.

How is it possible to frequent much Company, without having many Subjects of Complaint? The too exceptious Gentlemen can never promise themselves any Quiet; but they ought at least to have the Discretion not to disturb the Repose of others by their eternal Narratives of the Affronts they have received. They can talk of nothing else. But I would as soon be confin'd to *Westminster-Hall*, as to be

236 *Reflections upon* Ridicule.

be always hearing these Complaints, in which I have no Interest. What is it to me if such an one saluted you in an awkward way, or did not bow to you so profoundly low as you expected?

It is impossible to live long in the World without being exposed to some Disgrace; and that is the Juncture wherein a Man shews perfectly what he is. As much as possible, we should avoid discovering any Weakness, and thereby refuse our Enemies the malicious Satisfaction of seeing us miserable, and too sensible to our Misfortunes. But neither ought we to affect a fictitious Constancy, or a stoical Indolence, when the Posture of our Affairs requires us to be affected. That mistaken Haughtiness sets every body against us, and commonly hinders us from taking the Measures necessary to retrieve us from our Confusion.

I saw *Frontinias*, the same Day he receiv'd the Orders for his Banishment, counterfeit the agreeable Laugh with his Mouth wide open, and entertain his Visitants with Tittle-tattle of Things indifferent, who came to make their Compliments of Condolance, and express their great Concern for his Misfortune. I know that a Man of Courage ought not to sink under his ill Fortune; but I know also that Decency requires not to act a merry Part, and the flourishing Talker, when our Affairs demand more serious Meditation.

A Man

A Man that has had any Misfortune, loves always to be talking of it; as he is pierced with it himself, and finds some Satisfaction in venting his Grievs by telling them, he thinks others are like affected: But though they in Complaisance express their Concernment, they ought, as much as possible, to be excused these uneasy Discourses, excepting when we have Occasion for their Advice how to behave ourselves in those nice Conjunctures, wherein we are at a Loss which way to turn. For then both Decency and Charity command, not only to hear the miserable Complaint, but Generosity requires we should suggest to him, when we can, the Means, and lend him the helping Hand to deliver him from his Misfortunes.

It is a thing of so nice a Consideration to praise Friends, that it is almost impossible to observe all the necessary Precautions in a Matter where we can't be too exact. If our Commendations are excessive and hyperbolical, we fret and discompose our Hearers, and by no means persuade them. We ought moreover to observe Places and Circumstances, and speak modestly of others before those we owe a great Respect, who take but little Pleasure in hearing the Praises wherein they have no Part.

To make a Trade of squandering insipid Praises upon every body, is a very despicable Character; Civility demands we should be complimentary upon some Occasions, but 'tis turning Fool, indiscriminately to bestow our
Con-

238 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

Compliments learn'd by heart, upon all Comers, and as soon as we accost them begin their Panegyricks. There's nothing more nauseous to a judicious Taste, than these fulsome Flatteries: I had rather have hard Words bluntly said to me, than hear these everlasting Encomiasts, that are constantly giving me an Incense that makes me drunk, and gets into my Head. If you publish but a Trifle like this, which you consider as an Amusement, they exclaim, 'tis all divine, 'tis a bewitching Piece, the Manners are curiously treated, and the *Ridicule* is admirably described. Where should a Man hide himself from these Persecutors? And what can be answered to their extravagant Praises?

You are advanced in Years, *Chrysalides*, and you marry *Melissa*, young, handsome, witty, full of Charms and Agreements: Do you think you don't expose yourself to the greatest Chagrins, and all the Miseries of Marriage? I moreover foresee, that you'll be but little pitied for the Disgraces happening in the Sequel: 'Tis an ill sorted Combination, and you can blame no body but yourself for all the Troubles you plunge into, Hand over Head.

A miserly Husband, who denies every thing to a young Wife, that does not furnish her wherewithal to play, and dress genteelly, hazards both her Honour and his own. 'Tis a wretched Piece of Policy, by an excessive Harshness to force a young Wife to seek from Home the Comforts and Advantages of an agreeable

agreeable Life: That is but too favourable an Opportunity for a liberal Lover, who is acquainted with the Condition and Inclination of the Woman. She is in Danger of forgetting herself, and betraying her Honour, if she has less Concern for her Reputation than for Money, Play, or Finery. *Felice* had not made the wrong Step she did, but for the Whim and Folly of her Husband; tho' she brought him a considerable Fortune, he refuses her every thing she most desired: She found in her Necessities some compassionate People, but she was over grateful. There was more of Revenge than Debauch in her ill Conduct; she chose rather to dishonour herself, than not to punish an Husband who treated her with an intolerable Severity.

Our Importunity to tell all the News we know, or think we know, makes us commonly regarded as Impertinents: The generality of News but little interesses those that hear it, and hinders them from saying Things that would more delight them; these News-mongers are commonly barren Wits, incapable of thinking, and furnishing a Stock out of themselves for Conversation. 'Tis easier to relate what a Man has heard or read in the Gazette, than to invent Things handsomely himself.

In relating a Story, or a Piece of News, a Man ought not to amplify the Circumstances which every body knows, and has heard twenty Times over: These Repetitions are fatiguing, and make us long for the End of the Story.

'Tis

240 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

'Tis ill Breeding to interrupt a Man who has begun a Story; it is better to be ignorant of some Circumstance, than that the Relator should be deprived of the Pleasure he has to be heard.

A Man exposes himself to great Troubles by writing certain Things, that create Mischief when they come to be divulged. How many interested Persons sacrifice your Letters, and do themselves Honour at your Cost? When the Mischief is done, it is too late to remedy it, all Apologies are in vain: The Publick is not easily brought off, but insists upon what is written.

What Delight some People take in railing against the present Times! In Societies where nothing but Mirth is design'd, they come and mingle their importunate Discourse concerning the Barrenness of the Season, the Dearness of Things necessary to Life, how hard it is to get their Money of their Debtors, and of the frequent Bankrupts in the City; they can talk of nothing else, their Minds are wholly taken up with Loss and Gain: Whereas these Discourses are very disobliging to less interested Persons.

There are no People worse rewarded than those who intrude with their Advice; Men don't love to be made sensible of their Faults, the Sight whereof troubles and offends them: They are still less disposed to acknowledge them, since their Vanity is wounded by that Confession. The only way to talk with them is to flatter them, and artfully remove the

Prospect

Prospect of the ingrateful Objects, to shew them those that are more agreeable and welcome to their Fancies.

'Tis acting against good Sense and the Laws of Society, to make a Mystery to our Friends of Things that ought to be brought into Conversation, and not be kept as Secrets. One would think that *Gleobulus* is the Repository of the Mysteries of State: He dares not venture to speak, for fear he should drop some Word that might be interpreted Treason or Misprision: He constantly looks about lest any body should hear him: He whispers in your Ear the mighty Nothing; and conjures your Secrecy to every thing he tells you; all which you knew before by the publick Fame.

There's no depending upon the Discretion of Men: You no sooner have entrusted them with some important Secret, but they run to impart it to some other; 'tis true, they do it under the Seal of Secrecy; but he that's made the Confident uses the same Liberty that they took themselves; and thus an important Affair grows publick in a Moment: But the first Revealer, who was most concern'd, commits the greatest Fault.

We see People that easily insinuate themselves, and grow presently familiar to obtain their Ends. The first Visit they make you, they take the Liberty to borrow all things, telling you they deal without Ceremony, and consider you as their Friend. But they should at the same time examine, whether they are consider'd under that Character. There are

M

none

242 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

none but those we love, or would oblige, to whom we care to lend or give: And therefore Persons that borrow ought to be very reserv'd, and be well acquainted with the Humour and Character of others, before they venture to ask.

If you would not be burdensome in the Visits you pay, try first to penetrate the Disposition of the Persons that compose the Company, that you may enter into their Sentiments and Interests. If the Conversation turns upon Mirth, and you put on too serious and philosophical a Face, you are look'd upon as a Pedant and Impertinent. Don't act the *Censor* if any thing happens to be dropp'd that offends your Gravity. People are not always dispos'd to hear Remonstrances, which have a very bad Effect when they are ill taken.

The Reason why some People are so ill receiv'd in most Houses where they come, is their want of Attention to consider what is suitable to the Persons visited; they have neither Condescension nor Docility, nor Complaisance to suit themselves to different Characters. Haughty Persons require Submissions and Respects; they that set up for Wit, would be attended, applauded and admired for every thing they say. A Man insatuated with his Rank and Quality, must be flatter'd upon that *Chimera*. 'Tis easy at one Glance to distinguish the predominant Passion of those you have to do with; if you don't consider them in that Particular, they'll consider you as a troublesome Person.

Ar.

Arsennas waits to take his part in a Company 'till all the rest have taken theirs. If Mirth and Gaiety be the reigning Humour, he vents grave and austere Maxims; he seems to take it amiss that others should think of Pleasure and Diversion. If the Conversation be serious, he is sure to be facetious, to oppose every bodies Sentiments, and to be the Reverse of all the rest. People of this Character are the Scare-crows of Society.

Concert your Measures better in visiting your Friends. You precisely chuse the Time when they are overwhelm'd with Business: You fix yourself in their Houses to entertain them only with Trifles: You put them upon soliciting for you, at the time they are tired with the Visits they have made or received: They want rest, and you would expose them to fresh Fatigues.

Long Visits generally weary those that receive them; their present Disposition, Chagrins, Business, will not always permit them to give you a sedate Hearing: 'Tis easy to know when People are weary of us; but the Reflections of that Nature are mortifying, and lessen the Idea every one has of his own Merit.

Of Caprice.

HOW many Distempers has a ridiculous Man to be cur'd of? The Things he most impatiently longs for, he loaths a Quarter of an Hour after. He loves and hates the same Persons, in the same Day. He caresses and extolls you, transfixt with your Merit, and full with your good Qualities. No sooner have you turn'd your Back, but he tears you with horrible Slanders, and thinks you the lawful Object of his Satires. His Inequalities and Whimsies, his Joys and Discontents, his Complaisance and Roughness, his surly and insinuating Humour, his good Nature and Brutality, would make one think that it is not the same Man, since he acts by so different Principles.

The Head is guilty of fewer Faults than the Heart: Ignorance of Duty and Obligation is not the cause of so many Incivilities, so many rough and disobliging Answers, so many ill Offices Men mutually do one another, and so many ill natur'd Practices: But 'tis a perverse Heart; People delight to vex, offend, and disoblige the Persons they converse with. He that is faulty in point of his Heart, sins in Principle, and has in him the Foundation of all Vices.

Don't

Don't ask *Beroald* any thing you mightily desire: If you intimate that he would do you an extraordinary Pleasure by granting it, you take the surest way to be denied. He would be persuaded, if the thing was more indifferent to you; therefore don't solicit him nor press him; wait for the Moment of his Caprice; he'll come to you, when you least think on't, and when his Assistance will be too late.

The Maggotry of some People is inconceivable. Every thing vexes and offends them. A Man knows not what Measures to take to enter into their Sentiments, because they have none fix'd and settled. Their contradictory Humour runs counter to all other Desires and Pleasures. Enemies to Divertisements they hate every thing that tastes of Joy; and that which gives others Mirth, puts them into ill Humour. Such People should, at least, have the Discretion to stay at home, and not enter into Company, to poison it with the Rancour of their Spleen. 'Tis a sufficient Intimation to *Lyfander*, that you desire something, when you oblige him to oppose it all he can. You put him to a strange Non-plus, by engaging him to declare himself the first, so fearful he is lest his Choice should agree with others.

'Tis prodigiously fantastical to be still contrary to the Opinion of all the World. People of this Character never open till others have declar'd their Intentions, to have the Pleasure of impugning them. It becomes us to be always of the Side of Truth and Sense

246 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

and not expect that others should be so docile and complaisant, as to admit our Caprices for good Arguments.

The whimsical Unevenness of some People ruins the Pleasure of Conversation. We know not what Measure to observe with those, who pass all of a sudden from one Extream to another, and from having diverted the Company by their good Humour and Facetiousness, fall into a Gravity and Melancholy that no body can comprehend. From Mirth and Gaiety they grow sad, without knowing the Reason why; and keep a pensive and stupid Silence after they have said a thousand agreeable things.

What Dependance is there upon those People, who can't keep in the same Mind a Quarter of an Hour together: To Day they make you a thousand Offers of Service, and to Morrow they will not so much as know you. Their best Friends can't reckon upon their good Intentions. Strange Effect of their odd Humour! that hinders them from knowing their own Thoughts. People of this Character are very uneasy to others and themselves.

To bring others over to your Opinion, you must study their Temper, and get into them by a forced Condescension, without discovering the Artifice. If you pretend by an high Hand to carry the Suffrages of the World, and to decide by an Air of Authority, be your Reason never so good, your Arguments will have no Force. Every one is tenacious of his
Opi-

Opinions: They that yield to yours, must persuade themselves that they are led by nothing but their own Intelligence.

Persons infatuated with their own Deserts, or that have had a mean Education: The Lady — *Dainties*, and Women that falsely pretend to Quality, never think that your Civilities are respectful enough. In vain you soothe, and compliment, and caress them; they are on the House-top for the least Word that accidentally escapes you. With such People you must always be upon your Guard, and at Dagger's Length; and therefore avoid them if you love your own Repose; for you must be constantly apologizing for what you have said, and be forced to ungrateful Explications. *Rossina* goes away dissatisfied from all the Companies she comes in; she still thinks you don't do sufficient Justice to her Merit, nor flatter her enough: She complains that all Women envy her Charms, and make Confederacies to ruin her Reputation.

Your starch'd and affected Wits endeavour to be taken notice of for Singularities, because they have not a right Notion of true Merit, nor know what is acceptable to Men of Sense. They love nothing but what is excessive and extraordinary; whereas the Judicious are touch'd only with what is natural. *Phenice* would think she lost a part of her Reputation, if she condescend to talk like other People. She seems to be afraid of being understood, and seeks Periphrases and bombast Words to express the most simple

248 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

Things: Her Servants must have Recourse to Interpreters to decypher her Commands.

We see People whose whole Life is a continual Round of Whim and Caprice, and that are naturally Enemies to Order. The greatest Pleasures don't affect them, unless they be fantastical and extravagant, wherein they take Delight, which no body could ever think of. They neither eat, nor dress, nor lodge like other Folks, but deviate, in all they do, from the common Ways of Mankind, desiring to signalize themselves by the Extravagance of a capricious and particular Fancy. There's no Fashion so humourous but they still out-do it; but generally their Intentions have the same Character as their Wit. They don't tend to a better or more commodious Way of Living, but only to make them taken notice of at any rate.

Jealousy is a Source of a thousand Impertinences: The Vapours of this dark Passion obscure the Light of the Mind, which is perpetually framing Chimera's, and raising Disturbance to itself from every thing in the World. That which gives others any Pleasure, puts them into inconceivable Disorder. Some even carry their Jealousies to their Mistresses Lap-dogs and Monkeys, and are out of Patience to see them laugh and play with these Creatures. The best Remedy to cure this Humour, would be to shew them all the Extravagancies and Follies this black, and fantastick Passion makes them guilty of.

Inexo-

Inexorable and excessive Criticism has commonly ill Effects, and does but little Credit to those who aim to distinguish themselves by an affected Dislike, and Subtilties over-strain'd: I had rather modestly praise what is but indifferent, than blame what is good, provided there be an Handle to excuse the doubtful Actions of People, who had no premeditate Design of Mischief; or the careless Places of a Book; a Man had better incline to the good-natur'd Side.

They that think they have Parts above the common Standard, fall easily into this Fault; they fancy they are oblig'd to shew their Delicacy, to give a great Idea of their Genius: They give no body Quarter, but unmercifully treat all sorts of Authors. They would think it a Detriment to them if they suffered a Book that was not their own to have the publick Approbation: 'Tis your Extravagance, *Berillus*, to be always different from the common Opinion; you leave the Play-House with a morose Look, where every body has been pleased. You were seen to cast insulting Glances on the Pit, and give those a pitying Look who indulged their Laugh. Do you think that no body dares laugh without asking your Permission?

Have no Commerce with those of so ill a Fame, that you can't see them without losing some of your Reputation: 'Tis a shrewd Sign that a Man begins to relax in Virtue, when he prefers agreeable Persons, of a suspected Probity, before others whose Integrity

250 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

Is universally acknowledged. When *Sylverina* is tax'd with visiting Women of a loose Life, all the Reason she gives is, that she had rather divert herself with the *Coquets*, than be tired with the *Austere*. This is an unsound Maxim; for we run the risque of quickly resembling those whose Company is so agreeable to us.

The insincere Praises we give those that are in the wrong, indulge them in their Caprices, as persuading them they are in the Right. This makes them proud and insolent; they exaggerate all the imaginary Affronts they have received, and teize all they meet with the Account of their Quarrels.

Do so much Honour to those that speak to you, as to hear them out: Scarce have they begun, but you interrupt them with precipitate Answers, before you know distinctly what they have to say. 'Tis an unpardonable Incivility that proceeds from a great Fund of Pride, Stupidity, or the good Opinion of your own Sufficiency, that makes you think you take things at half a Word, or else from a restless itch of talking.

That which makes the Conversation of Women to be generally insipid and distastful is, that they will be always talking, without giving the least Attention to what is said to them: They gaggle all at a time; as if it was for a Wager, who should make the greatest Noise. If People of another Climate, where they talk with more Reserve and Circumspection should be present, they would take them
for

for mad Women, and would be infinitely surpriz'd at the Extravagance of our Manners. The Rule is, to give him that has begun the Relation Time to make an End of it at his Leisure: You'll always find some Opportunities of a Pause, in which you may make your Objections, without breaking the Thread of the Narration.

You have always, *Dorimon*, a sower Ferment within you, which troubles your own Repose, and makes you trouble that of others; you are constantly reproaching them without Foundation: At the time they do you Service you complain of being neglected, and would still have them do something further, after they have done their utmost for you.

Singularities, of any kind, are always offensive. What a whimsical Fancy have those that love to alter the Fashion of their Cloaths? We ought to go as others do, and not seek to be admired for an unusual Dress. However, there are Proportions and *Decorums* to be observed; old Women ought not to follow the Caprices of Youth. *Tiberina*, who is upon the decline, renders herself ridiculous by her Patches, her high Head, and the Gawdery of Ribbons, that fit none but the younger sort.

The Mode in *France* is the very Triumph of Caprice; that which charms the Eyes to Day, to Morrow is exploded by pure Whimsy. If a Man lived an hundred Years, and carefully preserved all the different Garbs he wore,
he

252 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

he would have a Wardrobe for the most fantastical Masquerade. The other Nations of *Europe* reproach the *French* Incertainty in this, but perhaps without just Reason: These frequent Changes employ abundance of Workmen, who could not otherwise tell how to live, and are of great Advantage to Trade. We see, too, that other Nations, with all their Phlegm, study these Fashions, and submit to these Caprices, wherein there always appears something that is genteel, and well imagin'd.

They that appear so composed and sedate, are sometimes as much agitated in their Soul as the most tumultuous Persons; but, for all this, we are obliged to them for this seeming Tranquility, whereof they have all the Pain, and others all the Profit. When a Man knows himself, and is not Master of his Passions, he ought to avoid all the Occasions of exposing his ill Humour. *Erastus* is the genteelest Man imaginable, provided he does not play: He growls, he rages, he swears, as long as his ill Luck lasts; he has no Regard for Women of Quality he plays with; he brutishly taxes them with their Intrigues and Amours, to be revenged of his bad Fortune, and in some sort repay himself, by these Rudenesses, the Money they win of him. Tho' it be the Men's Part to give way to the Ladies, they are forced to recede first, to avoid his Caprices and odd Humours. *Erastus*, and others like him, ought never to game.

The

The Character of a Liar is odious and contemptible; some have contracted such an Habit of Lying, that they can't forbear it even in the most indifferent Things; they are laugh'd at to their Face, and are not credited, even when they speak Truth.

There's no reckoning upon the Friendship of People that deal in Slander, because that Inclination continually over-rules them; the Pleasure they take in Abuse, makes them forget that their Friends are concern'd in their ill Stories: They neglect all *Decorum*, and, not considering how they incur the Contempt of those that hear them, who are Witnesses of so extravagant a Proceeding, they sacrifice their Reputation and their Friends to a Jest.

Take care to conceal better your Jealousies and Mistrusts; you have a Fancy that every body has a Design to deceive you, and you discover your Uneasiness thereupon: They that are suspicious of all Mankind, are not always the honestest Men. You say that your Servants rob you, that your Wife ruins you, that your Children carry from your House every thing they meet with; they don't so much as think of it, but you'll prompt them to it by your ill-grounded Suspicions.

'Tis not Science that spoils the Mind, but the Fault of those that make an ill Use of it: A Man who has his Head turned to Pedantry, the more learned he grows, the more ridiculous he becomes; his Disposition, Ways, Manners, and Discourses, are infected with the Disease of Pedantry. He is intractable, proud,
in-

254 *Reflections upon* Ridicule.

incivil, unpolite, opiniative. On the contrary, a Mind well turn'd receives the finishing Stroke and Polishing from Science. There's nothing rude, nor wild, nor disgustful in his Behaviour.

You seem restless and disturbed at others Commendations; that Indignation you shew, is a Sign of the Littleness and Malignity of your Soul.

The same Principle, that gives us so much Pleasure to hear ourselves praised, makes us hear others commended with so much Pain; we ought to be so much Masters of ourselves, as to conceal our Vexation, if we would not have others merry at our Cost: They take a malicious Pleasure to see the Confusion of vain People, and to give them some sensible Mortification.

'Tis a Sign of the Caprice and Magottry of Women to delight in Disorder, to abandon the Care of their Houses, and suffer their Affairs to run Riot by pure Negligence: This Libertine Life has a thousand Disgusts attending it. Their domestick Necessities give them cutting Reflexions every Moment, but they are past all Discipline, when they are used to this irregular Life. Spending the whole Night in Play, sleeping all the Day, observing no Order, no Decency, this is the System of their Life. This disorderly Conduct is strangely relishing, which makes a more even and regular Life irksome and distasteful.

Adriastus resolves and unresolves in the same Moment; his restless and defultory Soul fluctuates from one Thought to another; what pleased him in the Morning, displeases him at Night: He promises and refuses the same thing to the same Person in the same Moment. He began building an House in the City, which remains unfinish'd, because he had laid out the Money design'd for it upon a Piece of Land. He was first of the College, but he chang'd his Gown and Band into a Cravat, and Equipage of a Musqueteer. The Army, the first Campaign, seem'd too tumultuous a Business, at present therefore he prefers the Quiet of the Bar, and thinks of buying an Office of the Robe; but he waits first to determine whether he shall not take a Gown and Cassock.

For Men of the Sword and Gown reciprocally to slight and despise one another, is a Custom pretty much establish'd, though it cannot precisely be said upon what Foundation: But for a Man of the Robe to despise those of his Profession, is a Whimsy that one would think should have no Example. This Maggot, perhaps, proceeds from hence, that no body is content with his Condition; and yet the only Means of an happy Life is to keep within our own Dimensions, and consider our State on its most favourable Sides. The natural Inconstancy of Men, and Hopes of being more happy in another Profession, makes them often take wrong Measures. A rich young Abbot renounces the Reposes of an Ecclesiastick Life, to throw himself into the
Tu-

256 *Reflections upon* Ridicule.

Tumult of Arms. Young Magistrates, tired with dragging their Robes after them, abandon the Magistrature for a Post in the Army. How whimsical is this!

They that are always tormenting themselves can seldom suffer those they live with to be at Rest, but make them bear the Pain of their ill Humour; when their Discontents are reasonable, they are more easily borne with: But who can suffer the Fantasticalness of People whom Fortune smiles upon, who live in Wealth and Ease, who have no Trouble upon their Hands, and yet are preyed upon by a gloomy Melancholy, without knowing the Reason why? They are continually making lamentable Complaints of their ill Fortune; they are well cloath'd, well housed, well fed, well served, and have nothing wanting, and yet they are unhappy; but they are to thank their fantastical Humour for it.

Jealousy is an infallible Sign of an ill-turn'd Mind, and a base and groveling Soul; 'tis a secret Reproach a Man makes to himself of his want of Merit: He distrusts himself, and fears to be outshone by others of a more substantial Worth. People tainted with this Poison, spitefully behold others Success; the Lustre of their Virtue dazzles their jealous Eyes, and they cabal and use all sorts of Artifice to diminish it. 'Tis a wretched thing to establish ourselves upon others Ruin, and a very scandalous Way to Fame.

We see People of so whimsical a Temper, that they can't suffer any thing above them.

The

The Merit of others dazzles and confounds them; they fear their Competitors Advancement, and can't pardon Fortune the Favours which she shews them.

Rancour, Spite, and Jealousy, are the Causes of the little Pleasure Men take in one another; they make it a Point of Honour to defend their extravagant Opinions, which, when they have once advanced, tho' never so unreasonably, all the Arguments in the World can never cure them of their Obstinacy.

There's more Honour than is imagined in receding from an Opinion; a worthy Man, who is sensible of his Mistake, takes another Road, and fairly acknowledges his Error. A heady and presumptuous Fool thinks his Glory is interested to maintain his Point, and not own himself in the wrong; but whatever he says to confirm his first Positions, betrays his Ignorance and ill Nature. Is it so rare a thing for Men to be deceiv'd, that they must think it a Disgrace to make a Blunder? 'Tis more dishonourable to defend it with an obstinate Conceitedness.

There's no Remedy to the Whims and ill Humour of some People, the least Trifle puts them into Fury that there is no appeasing: They magnify Objects to seek out Reasons for their ill Humour, and blacken all Things with their Spleen: They think we always design to vex and affront them, and when once the Fire of their Passion blazes, they can no more recover their Senses. The way to prevent falling into these whimsical Extravagancies, would

258 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

would be to consult their Reason in the Intervals, when 'tis disengaged from the gloomy Melancholy that overcasts it.

To be angry on frivolous Occasions, is a Sign of Rusticity, or a bad Education; well-bred People are not easily disturbed, they don't seem to hear every thing that is said, they make Allowances for the Freaks and Caprices of Men with whom they converse: Proud and haughty People, if they have but indifferent Sense, or are but little conversant with the World, can suffer nothing, and think us always wanting in our due Respects. Hence they are always in the plaintive Strain, and we are commonly obliged to bear very keen Reproaches.

If they are impertinently angry, and one takes upon him to make them sensible of their unjust Proceeding, they forget their first Quarrel, to make a personal one with him who attempts to bring them to Reason. We have seen People break with their best Friends who did their utmost to retrieve them from a scurvy Affair, or hinder them from plunging deeper in the Mire. Men are such Idolaters of their own Notions, and they are so strangely fantastical, as to chuse rather to expose themselves to eternal Vexations, than to confess they are in the wrong, in Things wherein they are most unreasonable.

Of



Of False Delicacy.

'TIS not always the Test of Wit to be over-squeamish; that false Delicacy generally grows upon a Stock of ill Humour or ill Breeding: Well-bred and polite Persons easily excuse or dissemble others little Faults, not that they are insensible of them, but they tolerate and excuse 'em by good Nature, to spare the Guilty the Confusion of them.

To what Use in human Conversation are those People to be put, that always run counter to the rest, and censure what every body approves? They can find nothing that can touch and please them, and they think by that affected Niceness to get the Reputation of an exquisite Taste. But instead of it they are regarded as *Misanthropists*, that ought to be banished Society, or as Fools that want common Sense, and would assume a Superiority, by pretending to be nice and difficult.

That studied Delicacy you affect in every thing, makes you consider'd in the World as a conceited Fop; there's no body, of what Merit soever, can content you: The most regular Features of the finest Faces, to you are unproportionate and deform'd; all the wittiest Things you hear can't make you smile:

260 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

smile: The finest Scenes of the best Comedies make you gape and nod, and when every body bursts with laughing, you seem splenetick and tir'd. Are these Vapours, or the Effect of your bad Judgment, or Capriciousness?

The Choice of the Company we keep is one of the Things we ought most to study; but it would be a false Delicacy, or a ridiculous Vanity, to be familiar with none but Persons of Quality, and reject those of meaner Birth: Personal Merit should take Place of Titles in our Esteem. The Conversation with great Lords is not the most agreeable; their Manners are not always answerable to their Extraction. Those that wear the Titles of Viscounts and Marquesses, have commonly a great deal of the Vulgar in their Souls.

The common Infatuation of People meanly born, who have made their Fortune, is to put themselves on a Level with those of the first Quality, and disdain their Equals; they presently forget what they were before their Rise: Their Train, and Table, and high Play, with the Deferences that are paid them, insensibly accustom them to believe that their Wealth equals them with Peers, and make them despise those that are not able to live so great.

One kind of Impertinents, that I find very troublesome, are those that relish nothing that is said to them; 'tis in vain you endeavour to divert them, and recompence them for the Trouble of their Visit: Nothing touches them,

Concerning False Delicacy. 261

them, and their Weariness appears upon their uneasy Face. They do nothing but rub their Eyes, and continually ask what a Clock it is, even as soon as they are enter'd. Those that are so squeamish, have Reason to apprehend that others are as weary of their Company.

How many Troubles and Disquiets might we save ourselves, if we were not nettled at what others say of us? How many uneasy Moments does a false Delicacy give us? 'Tis true, this great Moderation is a Virtue of difficult Attainment, and very severe Practice; but the Repose it brings with it is a sufficient Recompence for the Pains we take in the Conquest. I would as soon bawl at the Bar, as be expos'd to perpetual *Eclaircissements*. If what we are charged with be true, we must silence Obloquy by reforming it; if it be false, 'tis not our Person that's attack'd, but our Shadow, and we ought not to be disturb'd: The slighting such Discourses pulls out all their Sting, and deprives the Authors of the malicious Pleasure they take in Slander. When we are too tender, we can't promise ourselves much Repose, but are made the Mark for all that love to vex us.

'Tis this false Delicacy that renders Women's Conversation so generally incommodious. The least Word that is said to their Disadvantage, which they always interpret to the worst Sense, gives them strange Disturbance, and they make lamentable Complaints of it wherever they come. The most intimate Friends can't pardon one another any thing; most of
their

262. *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

their Conversations pass in Explications and Apology, to give a good Meaning to what is said or thought concerning them. It requires to be something more than Woman to be above this pettish Delicacy, and not to take Fire on so impertinent Occasions.

To meet with Satisfaction in the Commerce of the World, we must use ourselves to live with all sorts of People, and never give any premeditate Affront: There's not so little an Enemy but may hurt us, and make us spend some uneasy Hours.

'Tis not always by Apologies, and making the most Noise, that we best justify ourselves; a Man of Honour, whose Conscience has nothing to reproach him, when he is unjustly accused, modestly gives his Reasons: If they are not admitted, he rests satisfied with the Testimony of his own Heart, compensating himself by the Pleasure of his Innocency, for the Injustice that is done him, and by his Tranquility giving a new Lustre to the Clearness of his Virtue. Delicate People can't stifle their Resentments, but retort their Affronts by tart and injurious Replies, which are but doubtful Proofs of Innocence.

Varnes in Ostentation of his eminent Science, and nice Palate, can't resolve to own any thing good that others do: He never approved a Sermon, a Plea, or a Comedy. Is this want of Judgment, or Jealousy? 'Tis one of the two. He has too little Sense, and too great an Opinion of himself to praise the excellent Works of others; but in Recompence
he

Concerning False Delicacy. 263

he continually boasts of his own, which are abominable.

The use of Ceremonies is almost out of Date, and I think there was Reason to repeal these Laws of Constraint; and yet there are some Formalists who think themselves neglected, if you don't pay them certain Devoirs they demand. You must content them; the great Rule being to humour the Taste of those we are obliged to live with. Why should we go purposely to offend them, for the sake of a Bow not made to their Humour, or not submissive and respectful enough.

If you stand too much upon Formalities, and are over-exceptionous with those of your own Society, you'll be avoided as a *Misanthropist*. We see such, as to be thought delicate, carry their Delicacy even to Moroseness; they like nothing, and admire nothing, content only to admire themselves: The Misfortune is, that they have no other Admirers. Intoxicated with their own Complacency in their own rare Qualities, they can see nothing in others deserving their Attention.

The Wits are wondrously out in thinking we are obliged to them; Wit in the present Age is not so extraordinary a thing, as to give any great Distinction: These People are not always the best Company, being never satisfied with what others do: But they commonly affect only a false Delicacy, to assume an Air of Authority, and to determine sovereignly of all the Products of the Mind.

Men

264 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

Men would quickly be perfect, if they had the same Penetration and Zeal to correct their own Faults, as they have to reform others. We suffer by the ill Qualities of our Neighbours, and therefore would have them part with them; but do they suffer less by our Imperfections, and should we not save them that Pain by correcting ourselves?

How attentive and quick-sighted are we to observe all that is offensive in others! How severe are the Rules we lay down for their Behaviour! How indulgent are we to ourselves! How careless to get rid of our ill Habits! We commonly grow grey without perceiving them, or if we are sensible of our Faults, we are too lazy to take all the necessary Cautions to get free of them; at least let us not exclaim against those who have the same Faults and Laziness with ourselves.

The only Occupation of some People is to find Fault, and censure whatever they see or hear; they might, perhaps, be excused that false Delicacy and whimsical Moroseness, if they kept their Thoughts to themselves, and did not publish them too lightly: 'Tis a Mistake to think to pass for a good Judge, by being so severe a Critick. The continual Aversions of the Mind are Symptoms of its Indisposition, as the Dislike of Food is a Sign of the ill Temper of the Body.

It is not to be expected that Women should have the least Complaisance for one another; whether it be Delicacy, or the Effect of their Spleen, they give no Quarter, especially if there

Concerning False Delicacy. 265

there be any Rivalship, or secret Interest in the Case. They ought, however, to keep in their Reflections, without imparting to the Publick, the Discoveries they have made to the Disadvantage of their Rivals.

Men are willing enough to be rallied for some Vices, and sometimes are the first to speak of them. But it distracts them to have their bodily Defects ridiculed, which are obvious to all the World. He that will give you leave to laugh at his Gallantries, will be horribly affronted to hear of his Squinting or Lameness, though it be none of his Fault. Whence proceeds this false Delicacy for natural Imperfections, whilst moral ones, which we might reform are reckon'd as nothing at all?

The Reason why Men so little profit by others Directions, is, that their Advice is not ask'd with a sincere Design to follow it. They would have the Resolutions they have taken approved, the Springs whereof they conceal with a great deal of Mystery and Disguise.

Human Prudence is seldom Proof against the Treacheries of our Friends, because we don't distrust them. But a Man must be a Cully with a witness, who is deceiv'd by his Enemies, because he ought to be always in Suspicion of them. The more easy they seem to be reconcil'd, and the more specious are their Pretences, the more we ought to stand upon our Guard. An able General is never more vigilant to observe the Motions of the Enemy, and to avoid Surprize, than when Peace is in Agitation.

N

That

266 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

That which makes common Conversation so nauseous, are the Applauses bestowed on Follies. Narrow Souls admire every thing, and cry up the least Trifles that ought to be let pass. That which becomes a well-bred Man on these Occasions, is, to say nothing. It would be a criminal Complaisance to applaud offensive Fooleries; it would be likewise a faulty Delicacy, to bear with nothing but what is exquisite, and to express Contempt for every thing that is flat and trivial.

In giving Counsels we are less concern'd for the Event of the Thing, than the Success of our Advice: We would have it taken, and commonly make a personal Affair of a thing that no ways relates to us. Modestly propose your Arguments that your Opinion bottoms on, and don't discover a presumptuous and sufficient Air, that denotes your secret Complacency in your Merit. Consider that your Advice is consulted for the Success of an Affair, and not for the sake of shewing the Brightness of your Parts.

A suspicious Man is hard to be convers'd with, because we must have great Precautions, not to give him Umbrage. Persons of small Merit are always upon Thorns: They may take every thing by the wrong handle; they think there is some Mystery and politick Meaning in every Laugh; the least Sign or Gesture wounds their Imagination; they still think others talk of them, and that not to their Advantage. They take you brutally to task, and demand Explanation for Affronts you never design'd them.

'Tis

Concerning False Delicacy. 267

'Tis sometimes out of Policy that some People complain, as tho' we did not do Justice to their Merit. Their Conscience commonly gives them smart Reproaches, and they endeavour, by their continual Complaints, to make it thought that they are oppressed unjustly, at least to move their Pity, who are not at the Pains to trace their Conduct nearly, but rather take their Word for it.

I can't divine what Pleasure some People take in complaining constantly they are miserable. They have some secret Pride in it, to let us know, that their Merit is ill used or ill rewarded. But these perpetual Lamentations are very tedious to those that hear them; for the same Principle that gives us Pleasure in bemoaning our Misfortunes, gives others Pain to pity us. *Julia* is a very amiable Woman, but she is continually lamenting, and you can't be one of her Friends, unless you sympathize in her Miseries. Having enumerated all the Distempers she thinks she is attack'd with, she falls foul on her persecuting Fortune, the Injustice of her Enemies, the Indifference of her Friends, who have not all that Warmth for her Interest she desires. Lastly, she would move Compassion, and that's her Folly. We see her in good Plight, sufficient to make us think she enjoys a perfect Health; and yet she continually retreats to the Delicacy of her Complexion, to the Vapours and Head-ach, and fatigues all the World with the Account of her Infirmities. These Ideas, which put us in Mind of Medicines and Doctors, are dis-

268 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

gustful: Our Distempers should be talk'd of as little as possible. As *Julia* is always complaining, the World is even with her, and I find no body that pities her.

People of but indifferent Sense, have seldom Complaisance; they pride themselves in their Disgusts and inflexible Censures. They put on a disdainful Look, when you commend any thing that is good before them. They have no Command of their Indignation, but carry their ill Humour so far as to affront those who are just to others Merit, and sensible of the Beauties of a Work.

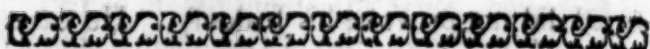
Avoid, as you tender your own Repose, those People that are so circumspect and scrupulous to have all their Respects paid them even to the least Punctilio's. The least *Decorum* that shall have been omitted unawares, makes them fret and fume, as if they were wounded to the Quick. The same Principle that persuades them every thing is their due, possesses them that they owe nothing to others; and they, without more ado, dispense with the most essential Duties. *Aminta* complains that no body visited her, the Day she had the Head-ach; but she never so much as sent an *How do ye?* to one of her Friends that was dangerously ill.

'Tis an Error to believe that the Works of former Ages excell'd those of ours. That Affectation always to praise the Ancients, is sometimes a sly way of censuring the Moderns; and 'tis a morose Niceness or secret Jealousy, that makes them expose an Opinion against their

Concerning False Delicacy. 269

their own Reason. *Eudoxus* would never rack his Brain for fine Expressions to commend the Ancients, if the Applauses *Titus's* Works deserved did not provoke his Jealousy. He cares not a Farthing for the Ancients; but would humble, and if possible ruin this Modern, that he may share of his Spoils, and enrich himself with the Ruin of his Credit. He makes it a meritorious thing to despise every thing that's new, to have it understood that he has the Taste of Antiquity; when at the same time it is certain he knows not an Author of *Augustus's* Age. To pass a right Judgment of a Piece, it ought to be consider'd separately, all Prejudice apart. Jealousy, Party-Strife, and Factions warp the Understanding, and hinder it from receiving the true Idea of a Favourite.

Subtilizing over much in point of Authors, is not always the sign of a good Wit; but commonly of a sordid Jealousy. You are mad to hear others Works commended, and there's no Artifice but you use to vilify them, especially when you pretend to the Glory of a fine Pen: But if you are infected with this Distemper, be cautious how you discover the least Symptom of it. Your Affectation and Dislikes, the Contempt you express to your Rivals and their Works, will contribute nothing to your Reputation, but only serve to make you consider'd as an envious Man.

*Of Decorums.*

THE Science of Respects is, as I may say, the Soul of Society, which teaches us to pay every one what belongs to them; and so disposes our Actions that no body may be offended with them. The Observance of *Decorum*, suffices to guard off *Ridicule*, and prevent all just Complaints of us. We must make great Reflexions, to distinguish what's convenient, from what's to be avoided. Decencies are of an infinite Extent. Sexes, Ages, Professions, Characters, Times and Places; demand different *Devoirs*; which Differences must be known and practised, if we would be acceptable to the World: whatever Merit you have, if you are negligent of *Decorum* you'll pass for an unpolish'd Person; destitute of the Art of Living, and insensible of what can please.

How is it possible for People grossly ignorant of *Decorum*, to please the Genteel and Well-bred? Their Actions, Words, Gestures, Walks, are so many Impertinencies. *Decorum* is learnt in the School of the World, which is the Fountain of Politeness and Agreements.

If we would please, we must study the different Respects we owe to all sorts of Persons

ac-

according to their different Characters: For there's no Decency in treating every body alike, and paying the same Deference to a Wretch, as to a Man of Merit.

'Tis certain that the Exterior constitutes the least part of a worthy Man's Merit: Yet he that is of a Profession that requires Gravity and Reserve, can't neglect Externals, without some sort of Degradation and Diminution of his Dignity. A great Magistrate would not venture to appear in publick, in colour'd Cloaths and a Crevat. If some of the younger sort take a Liberty herein, they are never the more esteem'd for it. 'Tis just as if an Ecclesiastick should wear a different Habit from what belong'd to his Profession.

You'll see *Clitus*, a young *French* Abbot, of two Thousand Pounds a Year, pretend that his Riches ought to supersede the Modesty of a Clergyman. You find him commonly in a Red Coat, because Black seems too solemn and grave for him; and he says he won't be condemn'd to Mourning all his Life. His Library consists of Romances and Novels. He has the Look, the Deportment, the Head, and Heart of a Trooper; and is sorry he can't make Campaigns. The time he spends at his Toilet and visiting the Ladies, gives him not Leisure to say his Prayers, and recite his Breviary: But however he orders it to be said by his *Valet de Chambre*.

Complaisance is the most charming Thing for Society, and the surest way to the Friendship of Men; but then it must be moderated;

272 *Reflections upon* Ridicule.

when it is excessive it grows insipid ; therefore we must consider what Reason and Decency require of us. 'Tis not Complaisance implicitly to espouse every Caprice, but Flattery and Folly.

It requires but little Pains to be civil and complaisant, with good natur'd People, who conform to all our Caprices, and submit to all our Desires ; but it requires a great Stock of Address and Condescension, to live with those Maggots, who follow only the Torrent of a proud and irregular Humour.

He can't be an honest Man who is not a faithful Guardian of the Secrets intrusted to him by his Friends ; even after he has broke all Commerce with them. We are not privileg'd to dispose of a thing which we are only made Trustees of : If their disorderly Conduct will not permit us to see them, our own Duty commands us to be faithful.

The first Thought that occurs in any Rupture with a Friend, is to say all we know in Disparagement of his Conduct, and Justification of our own. We studiously expose all his ill Proceedings ; discover Secrets to his Disgrace, committed to us in the time of his Friendship.

This is an infamous Method of Revenge, and commonly the Cause of great Remorse ; for upon Reconciliation, we are vex'd and confounded at our Levity, when the injured Person is made sensible of the ill Turns we have served him. In these tempestuous Seasons, we ought to be very circumspect, that nothing escape

escape us which we shall have Reason to repent of.

Nothing better demonstrates the Folly and Vanity of an human Mind, than that Impatience to tell every thing we know. 'Tis Nuts to vain People to declare what Confidents they are made; and to leave no doubt of it, they rehearse their Secrecies; unconcern'd for the Interests of those that gave them, with pure Indulgence to their own Vanity: But they don't foresee that it is the direct way to be despised, and look'd on as weak, giddy, indiscreet People, that can't be trusted with the least Trifle, and ought to be banish'd Conversation as the Pests of civil Society.

We see such as make no Scruple to say and do the most scandalous Things; who observe no Measures, and keep fair with no one; Reputation seems to be the last thing they are concern'd for.

An Excess of Familiarity suits with none, but those who are ignorant what 'tis to observe *Decorum*. Not that we ought to affect a Stiffness, and too melancholick a Constraint. Good breeding is no ways inconsistent with a certain Freedom, which pleases and becomes every body; But sometimes this Liberty is carried to an Extreme: And the same Persons, when in Company of venerable Men, fall into a serious and flegmatick Humour, something resembling Stupidity itself.

The Use of *Thee* and *Thou*, is taken up by the affected of both Sexes, who use one another very frankly: I don't absolutely condemn

274 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

this Custom; but 'tis extremely finical: The Commerce of polite People demands more Reserve, Caution and Respect. Mutual Defereces contribute much to a reciprocal Esteem, whereas too much Familiarity generally breeds Contempt, and sometimes ends in Quarrels.

There's a Season for every thing; what suits with young People, does not comport with a more advanced Age: We pardon a Page what would be unpardonable in a Magistrate, or a General in an Army. Women far in Years, who would be attractive by their Finery, act against *Decorum*. *Celinda* is near Forty, and yet she imitates *Junia's* little Affectations, who's but Sixteen.

Precepts are not so useful to make us acceptable to the World, as Practice and Experience: We should use ourselves to reflect upon the charming Behaviour of some, and the offensive Ways of others. If we would please the Judicious, we must always support the Character of an honest Man, without betraying it.

They that are nicest in point of *Decorums*, don't always deserve the most Respect; they are only so scrupulous about little Formalities, because their Reputation is attack'd: And as their Conscience upbraids them with Things that deserve Reproach, they always suspect some sly Meaning and Desire to affront them. Resentment, hard Words, and Blustering, are not proper Means to prevent the World's believing the Ill that's said of us.

They are to blame who have too little Deference for the Publick, to complain they are
too

too severely censured. We judge only by Appearances. Your Intentions may be good, but what we see is odious. We are not obliged to dive into the secret Motives of your Actions; 'tis your Business to take such Measures that no Action escape you to be censured.

All Excess is vicious, and offends nice Persons, who have a just Discernment; excessive or too elaborate Civilities are troublesome, and over-strain'd Haughtiness as offensive: The great Art of pleasing consists in a due Medium, betwixt too little and too much; which Temper is the Essence of human Virtues, and that which distinguishes the well-bred Man from the Coxcomb, who is governed only by his Caprice.

Tradesmen, Country Folks, and Pedants, are wonderfully full of Ceremonies; they teize you to Death with their eternal Compliments, and starch'd Civilities: They make a Bustle at every Door, and must dispute an Hour who shall go out last. The *English* by Degrees wear off all that's forc'd and formal. What Occasion is there to make such long Compliments, and speak such studied Things as make the Hearers sweat?

The Reason why so many People are disagreeable to us, is, their Neglect to cure themselves of a certain *je ne scay quoi*, which mingles with every thing they do. We judge of Men by Appearance, and seeing them take a Liberty to do such Things as offend us, we can't chuse but esteem them the less for it.

276 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

Is it enough, think you, for a Woman to do nothing to wound her Glory, when her external Conduct contradicts that Notion of Virtue where she takes Sanctuary? *Plotina's* Reputation is attack'd in an hundred weak Parts, which she is justly reproach'd with: But because she abstains, perhaps, from the grossest Part of Vice, she regards herself as a Pattern of Virtue, and neglects Appearances, which she calls Trifles and Formalities.

Do young Women imagine it sufficient to have a modest and composed Outside, and that under this their Disguise they can cherish vicious Passions in their Hearts, without incurring *Ridicule*, when the Mysteries of their Hypocrisy are discover'd? Of late Years they have laid aside that scrupulous Severity, which was a grand Security to Virtue, and appear too good-natur'd and complaisant, too gentle and familiar. In a word, they have not a sufficient Dose of Discretion, though this is one of the most essential Ingredients, that belong to them.

'Tis ill Reasoning for a Man to say, he is satisfied with a clear Conscience, and that he is not in an Humour to constrain himself to conform to the Caprice of the World. He that will not be at the Pains to save Appearances, irritates Satire, and there's no way to tye up Slander when it's once broke loose. 'Tis too late to take Measures, when one has lost his Reputation.

Young Women take a Liberty now a Days on certain Subjects wherein they ought to
ma-

manifest more Reserve and Circumspection: That wanton and audacious Deportment renders them contemptible. It ill becomes them to talk on certain Chapters, and amazes us to see them so early learned in Things they ought to be utterly ignorant of; on which Occasions they forget that Bashfulness and Modesty is their Province: If they are defective in that Point, they are past pleasing well-bred People; too free Discourse in the Mouth of a Maid, however cleanly wrapt, has always an ill Effect. If these Flatterers praise them to their Face for their good Humour, they despise them to themselves.

Mothers too great Indulgence to their Daughters is commonly the Corruption of their Morals; for when a Maid is young and handsome, she is continually exposed to the Flatteries of Admirers; and therefore this too easy Youth should be strictly rein'd by the Hand of a vigilant Mother, and buckled to its Duty. *Flavia*, who is at present so decried, had Virtue and Modesty when she first began to appear in the World; she owes her Ruin to her Mother, who, infatuated with her Daughter's Charms and Beauty, made her the Subject of her Discourse, and could talk of nothing else: She thought her an Original of Beauty, and would have every body admire her. It ravish'd her to see her surrounded with a Crowd of Lovers, which ador'd her like an Idol. She even was sedulous to observe to them her Daughter's graceful Air and Mien, and heighten all the pretty Things she

278 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

she said. Young Women's Souls stand too much bent towards Love and Wantonness, and there's no need to add Fuel to the Fire, and give License to the Inclination.

A chance Word dropt sometimes does abundance of Mischief, and occasions long Repentance: He that can wave giving his Opinion of others, when 'tis to their Disadvantage, has found out a noble Secret to save himself many Quarrels. So far, at least, we should prevail upon ourselves, as not to speak Things to a Man's Discredit, before People that would tell him again. This would be making ourselves Enemies on purpose.

The Indiscretion of talking too freely of one another, is the Source of those so many Differences that embroil the Quiet of Mankind; such as having heard disobliging Discourse, repeat it again to the Persons concern'd, are much mistaken if they think to oblige them by those indiscreet Confidences. It grates us at the Heart to hear a Man who is so impudent to tell us to our Face vexatious Things, though he only repeat what others have said of us.

To please in Conversation, we must hear what is said to us, and give an Answer to the Purpose; which is a Maxim observ'd by very few: They that think they have more Wit than others, neglect to hear, and would speak all; unattentive to what is said to them, they watch for a Moment to interrupt the Narration, that they may vent their own Thoughts, which take up all their Application.

'Tis

'Tis not enough to shine ourselves, but we must give others Time to shew their Parts, and speak in their Turn. Conversation is a sort of Commerce, to which every one is to contribute his Proportion, to render it agreeable.

'Tis not enough to be well qualified to please reasonable People, but we must join an obliging Carriage, which insinuates into their Tempers, and a certain Complaisance that plies and yields to their different Characters, with whom we are obliged to live. This Obligingness I speak of must not be artificial, or hypocritical; they that are civil against their Inclination, are not so on all Occasions, or with all sorts of People.

Your haughty People sometimes familiarize, and grow courteous and good-natur'd, in Contradiction to their Temper; whilst you flatter them, and indulge their Vanity, you have nothing to find Fault in them: But the least Word that seems to affront them pulls off the Mask, and brings them to their natural Character and Complexion. Their Reproaches, scornful Looks, and proud insulting Way, shews what they are, and render them very ridiculous.

'Tis a most odious and contemptible Character, that of playing the Wit at the Expence of Religion and Things sacred; such as talk jestingly of Mysteries they ought to reverence, don't so much discover the Beauty of their Parts, as the Deformity of their Morals. Women, especially, should not take the Liberty of maintaining particular Opinions in point of
Re-

280 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

Religion. 'Tis Odds but they that discover their Indifference to its Maxims, are of an irregular Conduct, and have a secret Interest to doubt of the Truths they contest.

What Notion can we have of *Celione*, who eagerly disputes in all Companies about the Immortality of the Soul, and always maintains the negative? Had we no other Argument of her Lewdness, her Sentiments in this essential Point of Religion were a convincing Proof of it. Were People in the right upon such Subjects, they ought, at least, to talk soberly of them; for what need is there to instruct the Publick in such Things as a Man ought to keep to himself?

There is no Virtue so perfect, but that our particular Actions contradict the Habit of doing Good; the greatest Application of a worthy Man should be so to conceal his Infirmities, as that no body might perceive them, or suffer by them: Let no Man flatter himself he has not always a worst Side, which he ought not to expose. The Reason of so many People's ill Fame, is not always that they have less Virtue than those that have Reputation, but because they take no Pains to conceal their Faults and Weaknesses objected to them from the Eyes of the World.

To consider the Life of some of the *French* Prelates, you would swear they did not take themselves for the Apostles Successors; their Train and Equipage, great Living, Magnificence of their Table, and high Play; their Deportment and Employments, are no ways
suit-

suitable to the Profession they have embrac'd: Their whole Life is consum'd in effeminate Sloth; the Care of their Flocks is the least Concern to them, which you would think given up to their Diocesans Reprobation. Hence we may well say, with one of their modern Poets,

*Est-ce pour travailler que vous etes Prelat ?
De votre dignite soutenez mieux l'eclat.*

Men of the long Robe, when they are young, unless they take Care, grow too airy and volatile. The Court Ways, which they study to copy, and copy ill, throw them off their Character, and give them a false Air, which commonly makes them ridiculous. Young *Cleon*, disgusted with his Band and Gown, will always appear in a Crevat and Coat; he talks always of Hunting, Dogs, and Horses, and very rarely of the *Code* and *Digest*. He is the whole Day at Table, grows drunk, and swears like a Captain of Dragoons.

The Reason why we find so few perfect in the Art of Pleasing, is, that they don't carefully observe what 'tis distinguishes accomplish'd Persons from the vulgar, and that makes others so offensive: Nothing forms the Mind like the Use of the World; this gives it that Tincture of Politeness which is only obtain'd by the frequent Sight of polite Persons, and copying from their Plan. They that begin to appear in the World, should be above
all

282 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

all Things solicitous to gain the Esteem of Men of Worth.

We have found the Knack of pleasing when we know how to adapt ourselves to the Genius of those we converse with; People naturally love to see their Tastes and Inclinations approved by others, and can't avoid some Complacency for those that conform to their Humours. If the Persons you visit are in a dark and cloudy Temper, you must compose your Countenance, and not accost them with a free and chearful Air; on the contrary, if they are gay, don't disturb them with an austere Mien, which seems to disapprove their Mirth: You would be look'd on as a troublesome Person, besides that it is uneasy to act such a disagreeable Part.

We are obliged in the Commerce of the World to see People of all Sorts; 'tis a great Art to be able to accommodate ourselves to all Characters, and the most certain Sign of a Superiority of Wit is, to know how to comply with others, so as to rise or stoop as Occasion serves.

Profess'd Scholars know not how to entertain the Ignorant; well-bred People are uneasy in the Conversation of Clowns: People that are gay, would always laugh, but that Merri-ment does not compromise with those that have any Trouble. The too serious, who never descend from their Gravity, are very uneasy to those who would give a Loose to their Mirth.

What

What a Plague to Society is a Man who has written a Book, or any Piece of Learning? You must have the Complaisance to hear and admire him. An Author charm'd with his own Work, thinks others have the same Pleasure in hearing, as he in speaking the Scraps of it. Intoxicated with the Praises of some Women pretending to Wit and Judgment, he is insensible of his Folly, and that Men of Sense regard him as a Pedant and an Impertinent.

To know how scandalous some Engagements are, we must consider them in others: Self-love is a kind of Veil, that covers the Ignominy of those Passions that are dear to us. In seeing what Pictures are drawn of those who have the same Vices, we may conclude that we are not more favourably treated. A young Woman that sees how they are handled that give themselves great Freedoms, may learn an useful Lesson, and say to herself, that Discretion and Modesty ought to be her favourite Virtues.

The Publick is an inexorable Judge, that ought to be more cultivated than it is; 'tis in vain to fly to the Excuse of Infirmary, and the Age's Relaxation from this great Severity: These pitiful Reasons are never heard. Whatever Merit a Woman has, it all goes for nothing without Virtue and Discretion, since 'tis own'd that Love is a Stain that sullies the fairest Life. If a Woman be not modest, tho' she have a thousand other good Qualities, and Birth and Beauty, she is never the more esteem'd.

284 *Reflections upon* Ridicule.

ed. Every body knows it; all the World says it. These are the first Lessons instill'd into young Virgins, and yet they'll go on in their own way.

It was no Advantage to *Plantina* to be the handsomest Woman in *England*; never was seen a nobler Air, or greater Agreements; and the Beauties of her Wit still heighten'd the Charms of her Person: But her moral Infirmities poison'd all her Merit. She was made to be adored if she had been more proud; but she received Laws from her Lovers, instead of commanding them with the imperious Severity she might have used had she not been too weak. Though her Fortune was considerable, few People would venture on her for a Wife, because of the Wantonness of her Temper, and Addiction to Intrigues and Gallantry. Her Beauty, Wealth, and Birth, could not secure her from being consider'd as a Crack.

I can't conceive how Women that game high, and see no other Women but as scandalous as themselves, that spend Nights and Days with Men in Publick Houses, would be thought modest, and take it ill to have their Virtue suspected: So irregular a Life is a Sign of a deprav'd Mind, and a corrupted Heart.

They that are still fond of the World, when the World has no Kindness for them, are much to be pitied. A worn-out and furrow'd Face, makes but an ill Figure amongst such as sparkle with the Fire of Youth. 'Tis not the Season to give way to Frolick and Mirth, when one is old; and if one put on a serious and reserved

served Look, 'tis a Constraint to Youth, who think only of Diversion, and breathe nothing but Gallantry and Gaiety.

Generally speaking Persons advanced in Years seem troublesome and formidable to Youth, because of the Disproportion of Sentiments, unless they stoop and condescend to Juvenilities unbecoming the Character of old Age. They should learn how to recede and to keep Company with their Equals, and no longer pretend to be agreeable and diverting, when the Season of those Things is over.

Is there any Reason for an old Woman that marries a young Husband to complain that he does not care for her; I know he is obliged to some Complaisance and Officiousness, to recompence her for the Charge she is at for him: But if she demands any thing else, if she requires Love, and Ardour, and Tenderneſs, she is much out in her Accounts. *Dorinta* is fifty, who has married *Philistus* of thirty, an handsome and genteel Man, who loves high Living and Play; *Dorinta* is wondrous fond of this young Spouse, she furnishes him with gaming Money, and fine Equipage, and a noble Table: He loves not *Dorinta*, but slights and disrespects her; 'tis an uncivil Man. Decency would oblige him to make up his want of Love to his old Wife, by some outward Shews, as who furnishes him with liberal Sums, to supply all his extravagant Expences.

The Design a Woman has form'd to marry a Man, with whom she keeps up an intimate
Cor-

286 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

Correspondence for a long Time, does not justify her to the World; no body penetrates her Intentions: And such a long establish'd Commerce is a sufficient Ground for Scandal, tho' there was nothing criminal in it. Reputation is a Plant of so tender a Growth, Infirmity is so over-ruling, the Inclination to judge ill of our Neighbour so natural, that we can't be too precautions, nor over-diligent to keep fair with the Publick, and stop the Mouth of Slander.

'Tis an odd Conjunction, an old Man match'd with a young Woman; such Alliances expose Women to great Temptations: The Caresses of an old Husband must needs be disgustful to a young Wife. The Disproportions of Age breeds an Antipathy, because naturally we love our Like, and the Cold and Phlegm of Age do but ill comport with the Flame and Charms of Youth.

Does a Man advanc'd in Years, nauseous, distemper'd, and over-run with Rheum and Defluxion, pretend to fix the Heart of a young Girl, that's brisk and amiable, and fond of Pleasure? He argues ill, if he flatters himself that his Riches will be much available to procure her Love, or that his little Assiduities and Complaisances will lessen her Disgust for his Person; that Officiousness, Desire of pleasing, and Affectations, render him still more disagreeable: The Caresses of a Man that is not lov'd are insipid, and turn the Stomach of a young Wife, who sometimes seeks to indemnify herself with more agreeable Company,

pany, for the *Tedium* an old Husband gives her.

'Tis a Mistake in an old Man to think to bear up by the Charms of his Behaviour; if his Employs, and Services, and personal Merit recommend him, he is respected and courted for the Succour that is expected from him; but if he affects to be agreeable, he departs out of his Character, and loses part of his Merit: The more he tricks up and sweetens to please People, the more he makes himself despised; and tho' he be cultivated, he is commonly regarded as a ridiculous old Fop.

Husbands are oblig'd to be civil and complaisant to their Wives, but not to Dotage and Stupidity; the Women sometimes abuse it, and when they get the Ascendant, their Empire is tyrannical. One would say, to see some Women's Conduct, and how termagantly they treat their Husbands, that they only look'd upon them as their Bailiffs, or Stewards of their Household, who have all the domestick Cares and Troubles upon their Shoulders, in which their Wives have not the least Part.

Avarice is a Counterpoise to Merit, and which weighs down the Balance: This single Vice is sufficient to make Men ridiculous, who might distinguish themselves by their other good Qualities. Nothing is more despicable than a covetous Lover, an interested Devotee, and one that builds, and spoils his Design by an ill-placed Thrift: He that has a shattered

Re-

288 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

Retinue, and denies himself the most necessary and agreeable Things.

The Outrage of Parents is not a good way to bring Children to their Duty; when they are in Fault, you are to punish them with Moderation, and let them see your Affection for them even in your Chastisements. Children on their Part ought never to be deficient in their Respects to their Parents, whatever rigorous Treatment they receive from them; the Harshness of the one does not authorize the Rebellion of the other.

We don't always get the Love of People by doing them great Services; I know not by what Caprice it is we are naturally under a Constraint with those to whom we are much obliged, and we incur the Sight of them with some Uneasiness and Reluctance.

A misplac'd Liberality does a Man no Credit; we must be liberal with Distinction, and dispose of our Bounty with Discretion. What would it cost to accompany our Presents with some obliging Word, which would heighten the Price of them?

Few People delight in Liberalities, or behold the Askers without some kind of Repugnance; this is a sordid Sentiment, and ought by no Means to appear. If you yield to the Intreaties of your Friends, let an obliging Look accompany the Kindness, and convince them you sincerely desire to do them Service.

Benefits increase or diminish Friendship according to the different Circumstances that accompany them; a Man's Blood rises against those

those that discover their Regret to do him a Pleasure. There's as much Art required in giving, as refusing: A Denial qualified with some Softenings, and a great Demonstration of Sincerity, does not offend rational Persons.

To adapt ourselves to the good liking of the World, we must give to every one what they are privileged to demand of us: Our Superiors demand Respect and Deference, and Submission; our Equals Civility and good Nature; our Relations Friendship; our Friends Affection and Confidence; every body Sincerity and the Services in our Power, when they have Occasion for our Assistance: We must help the miserable by our Charity, and our Enemies by Generosity. But let it be without Ostentation and Flattery, without Sordidness and Interest.

'Tis violating all the Laws of *Decorum*, to treat Persons superior to us by their Quality and Station, Employs or Age, in a familiar way; Familiarity is not sufferable but amongst Equals: And tho' People sometimes wave their Privileges, yet ought we not to forget our Duty, and treat them otherwise than their Character demands. *Urasylus* has been a Musqueteer six Months, and he talks with the same Liberty, Familiarity, and Jocoseness, to the Captain of the Company, as if he was talking to his Comrades. He entertains him with his Love-Intrigues, and gives him the Narrative of all his Adventures, with an Air of Assurance only incident to a Fool, that does not perceive he is laugh'd at, and that he offends *Decorum*.

O

The

290 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

The Dotages of the Understanding are easier cured than those of the Will; for the Will, where it fastens, will not easily lose its Hold: The Understanding is more desultory and volatile. Our Reflexions inward upon ourselves, help to correct the Extravagancies of the Mind, but the Engagements of the Heart hinder us from reflecting.

The Defect of Understanding is commonly the Cause that many handsome Women are not loved to the Degree they appear amiable; their Beauty is attractive, and their Carriage is forbidding: 'Tis a kind of Counter-charm, to dispel the Fascination of their Beauty.

Modesty so essentially belongs to some Characters and Professions, that the least Remission therein destroys all the Esteem a Man has acquired; it astonishes the Publick to see some People live with a License and Indulgence so unbecoming them. *Eugenius* has a thousand good Qualities; he has Sense, and Government; his Person is pliant and insinuating; he would be an accomplish'd Man, if he could rid himself of one Fault, which poisons, as I may say, all his Merit, and renders his fine Talents the less taking; He has too debonair and free a Deportment with the Women, tho' his Profession and Employs demand more Reserve and Circumspection.

'Tis a great Cruelty to despise People under Misfortunes: Have they not already particular Troubles enough, unless you add Raillery and Insult? The offensive Names of *Wretch*, *Scoundrel*, *Beggar*, ought not to enter into the Dis-

Discourse of the Well-bred; nor any other injurious Terms that raise an Idea of Contempt.

The Ladies that spend the greatest part of their Time in the Country, are commonly more unpolish'd than they that live in great Towns, because they study less to please; being taken up with their Housewifery and domestick Affairs, they neglect those Agreements that are not of much Use to them. There's no Occasion to take much Pains, when they are only obliged to please their Husbands.

The Women have for some time complain'd that the Men are uncivil, uncomplaisant, and brutal: Whom do they blame for it? If they were not so very tractable, the Men would be more submissive and respectful. No body can esteem your light and wanton Creatures, whatever fine Things he may tell them; they amuse for a time, but a Correspondence not founded on Esteem and Respect, can be of no long Continuance.

'Tis natural for Women to desire to please; nor ought they to be blamed, when they have no particular Views, and this Desire continues general. An Husband that observes in his Wife's Conduct any Inclination that's injurious to him, may express his Resentment, without making a Noise of it; that's the utmost Misery of Marriage, and the Ruin of Affection, which should be its chief Comfort.

The Ladies Morals are fallen a little to Decay; they don't majestically enough maintain the Empire which their Beauty and Merit naturally give them over Men. Formerly no

292 *Reflections upon* Ridicule.

body durst take Liberties before them: But Men at present are not so scrupulous, but discourse to them in a Manner that favours of the Looseness of the Age, the discreetest of 'em are not alarm'd, provided they talk in ambiguous Terms, and clean Linen. Those that seem to be exceptious, have so affected a way with them, as lets their true Sentiments appear through it.

Can a Woman of an irregular Conduct be ignorant of the Satire and Scandal that is spread of her? If she be not, how has she the Face to appear? As good a Look as she sets upon it, the Loss of her Reputation gives her many ungrateful Moments. The loosest of the Sex have still some Remains of Modesty; they can't forbear praising and esteeming Women whose Virtue does Honour to their Sex: Tho' they abandon themselves to their prostitute Temper, they have now and then some Intervals of Reason, wherein they can't pardon their own Disorders.

The idle Life of Women is the first Source of their Disorders; they know not how to spend their Time to keep off that Irksomeness of Thought which they dread above all Things. Hence they recur to Play, and other still more criminal Diversions; the generality love not reading, and those Books they study corrupt their Imaginations, and form their Heads to Amours and Intrigues. 'Tis not for Instruction they have Recourse to Books, but to learn the Adventures of other Women, and all the Artifices necessary to the Success of an Intrigue.

It

It seems a Paradox to say that the more a Woman abounds in Wit, the less reasonable, and, commonly, less amiable she is; her Head is instrumental to the Corruptions of her Heart. Vivacity renders her inconstant, Penetration gives her more Artifice and Malignancy; Experience daily demonstrates that the most slanderous, the most satirical, the most deceitful, the most wanton, and most extravagant among them, have more Wit than the generality of Women: Their Vices increase in proportion to their Wit, which they make a bad use of.

Most Women are incomprehensible; their Character is dark, and mysterious, and a Riddle: The same Woman is lavish in all her Expences, and covetous in all her Thrift. Unable to keep a just Medium, she hates to Day, even to Fury, him that she loved Yesterday, to Excess: She violently desires a thing, which she despises the very Moment that she has it. But what is still more unaccountable, is, that Men, who know Women's Faults and Infirmities, who are Witnesses of them, and suffer by them, can't break off from them. Men that are so wise, and Heads that are so strong, give way to be confounded by a Glance of an Eye, and the Lustre of an handsome Face.

Commendations misguide Women, and prevent their Information; they would have fewer Faults if they had less Incense given them: 'Tis their Flatterers that make them uncivil, proud, contemptuous, and haughty, by placing them above all other Women; and they are unwilling to descend from this imaginary Superiority.

294 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

'Tis from a delicate Pride, or Self-love, that most Women in *France* put on the Mask of Devotion, after they have acted another Character. This affected Devotion is a very convenient Transition from a most licentious, to that most austere Life which does them so much Honour in the World; there's no need of changing the Principles, but only changing the Habit: 'Tis not to be more humble, modest, passive, and mortified, that they lengthen their Sleeve, and fill their Bags with Primmers and Beads; but only more conveniently to enjoy all the Pleasures of Life, without being censured by the World. The *Decorum* of Gravity is due to a certain Age which they can't dispense with, without making themselves ridiculous; they dare not permit themselves Pleasures that make a Noise, but they find ways of Secrecy and Silence to satisfy themselves.

A Woman of Wit, who thinks herself so, and is fully persuaded of her Superiority of Genius, regards all the rest of her Sex with Pity. It will not be believed, perhaps, but Experience is a convincing Proof of it, that the more Wit a Woman has, the less she has of common Sense: If we examine the Characters of those who have ruin'd their domestick Affairs, who have fallen into Disgrace by the Disorder of their Conduct, who can agree with no body, nor no body with them; we shall find, without more ado, that all these Women had a great deal of Wit, and little Judgment.

Clo-

Clorina reads all sorts of Books, good and bad, without Distinction or Taste; she does not read for Instruction, but only to have the Glory of a great Reader, and to cite the Names of many Authors, which is all that she retains of her reading: But she has got by it a great Presumption, which appears by her severe Censures of all, even the most excellent Works, which she miserably decries. *Clorina* would be thought judicious at any Price, even at the Expence of her Judgment, which she betrays the Weakness of.

The wise Man has said, that a prodigal Woman ruins the best House; which is an unreasonable and criminal Dissipation, but most Women are more obnoxious to the other Extreme. They are naturally thrifty, and so far from Superfluities, as to retrench Necessaries; they themselves first suffer by their Sordidness, and every body else after. If they add Habit to their Inclination, they are incorrigible. This Excess of good Housewifery renders them very contemptible, perverts their natural Equity, and spoils their good Sentiments; and they need only this Weakness to ruin their Credit, whatever Merit they may have.

What Confusion does not a Woman cause in a Family, who is addicted to play, and hazards great Sums? Discord, domestick Discontents, and absolute Ruin, are the inevitable Consequences of this Passion, which at last turns to Fury and Distraction. It is rare to see Women weaned from this vicious Passion; nothing but Poverty and Ruin can banish them

296 *Reflections upon* Ridicule.

from Gaming. *Melantine*, after she has lost all, begs an Alms to game with ; one of her Relations has compassionately taken her to her House, she gives her Diet and Cloaths, and all Things necessary to her Subsistence ; but the Wreck of her Fortune has not been able to extinguish her Fondness for Play : She mingles with the Rascality, to sport the little Money she has got, which she has the Sordidness to beg. If Fortune happens to look upon her with a more favourable Eye, and make her a Winner, she ventures in one Day all her Profits for many Months. Incapable of being corrected by her past Misfortunes, and still flatter'd with the Hopes of emerging, tho' she be sunk beyond Retrieval, she leads a Life that moves the Pity of those that have seen her in so different a Condition.

The natural Temper of Women ought to keep them out of Law-Suits ; as their Indifference, natural Laziness, Love of Diversions and Pleasures, the Concern for their Adjustments, and their Beauty : But when they are once embarked, they have other Qualities to retain them to the Courts ; they are more unteachable, more heady, more interested, and more opiniative than Men, and will less hearken to Reason : Pride, Indignation, and a Shame of yielding, makes them continue a Suit wherein they have no Interest but to satisfy their Vanity and Revenge. Nothing is more pitiable than a Woman skill'd in the Subtilties and Quirks of the Law, by a long usage of the Bar ; you find an entire Revolution in her

her Temper; the Hurly-burly of Business serves her instead of Walks, and Pleasures, and Intrigues. Women are not naturally Enemies to Disputes, Quarrels, Broils and Variance; so that the Tumult of Trials grows at last an agreeable Occupation, because it indulges their Inclination to Dissention, Hatred, and Slander, and is an inexhaustible Source of Complaints, Reproaches, and Invectives: And they even find in it wherewithal to satisfy their dearest and nicest Passions. Their Charms are a wonderful Loadstone to attract the Judges, and engage them in their Interests; they study to please, and leave no Stone unturn'd to mislead them; Art seconds their Beauty, and when their Artifices have succeeded, they applaud themselves for the Triumph. Hatred hardly gives a Woman less Pleasure and Pain than Love; it seems to be the more lively and animated Passion, and gives the most violent Motions: Law-Suits are the Triumphs of this Passion which awakens all the rest, because Glory and Interest are the two Springs that move the Souls of the Litigants. You see what makes Suits everlasting, especially when Women are concern'd in them; they seldom come to an Accommodation: Prejudice bereaves them of the Liberty to hearken to good Advice. The more Arguments you offer to convince them, the more Subterfuges their Obstinacy finds to elude their Force; the End of their Life precedes the End of the Suit, and the last Breath of a Woman of this Character is cast out by the Regret she has to leave her Enterprize unfinished.

298 *Reflections upon Ridicule.*

We find Women that have a Strength of Genius, and a most exquisite Judgment, that are capable of a generous Resolution, and great Undertakings; but, generally speaking, they are of a weaker and nicer Constitution than Men, which makes them so indulgent to themselves, and so desirous to be flatter'd: Their Heads are fill'd with Prejudices, and turn'd to Trifling. When they have fix'd their Resolution, they obstinately maintain it, tho' they are naturally volatile and inconstant; 'tis hard to bring them off from their Amusements, to engage them in any thing more serious, unless they have some violent Passion that prevails over their Temper. This new Interest that engages them, draws them, as I may say, out of their selves, and discovers in their own Bottom such Recruits as they never thought on; they grow bold and enterprizing; Pains, Perils, and Disappointments, don't dishearten them. Oppositions whet their Courage, and teach them to bear up against all Obstacles; they repine not at the longest Fatigues, to purchase an insignificant Pleasure.

F I N I S.





A N
INDEX
OF THE
Principal Matters.

A.

	Page
A bbots more immodest than Pages.	119
Abilities ought not to be display'd all at once.	78
Absurdities, the Effect of want of Application.	228
Abuses, reform'd out of Interest.	207
Acknowledgment of Favours receiv'd must ob- serve a Mediocrity.	85
Acquaintance, abates the Care of concealing Imperfections.	2
Admi-	

I N D E X.

- Admiration *the Symptom of indifferent Sense,*
 128. *The Effect of gross Ignorance,* 156
The Judicious and Sincere admire but little,
 ibid.
- Advice intruded meets with a sorry Reward,
 240. *Why it takes so seldom.* 265
- Affectation defin'd, 58. *Its Effects.* 59
- Affronts forgot thro' Interest, 198. *The Nicety*
of observing Measures with People that have
affronted you. 235
- Agreeable, *why so many People are not agreea-*
ble to us. 275
- Alone, *Men do not act alone as they do in pub-*
lick. 118
- Ancients, *their Works did not excel ours.*
 268
- Anger, *on frivolous Occasions, a Sign of Rusti-*
city, 258. *The Danger of endeavouring to*
reclaim the Person thus angry. ibid.
- Antiquity of *Extraction affected.* 82
- Apologies are not always the best way of *Justi-*
fication. 262
- Appearances (*Outward*) *biass most Men.* 112
- Arcides *miscarries in his Fortune through Pride.*
 197
- Affurance in talking censured. 49
- Attendance, *the Effect of Interest, not Respect.*
 202
- Attention, *'tis hard to command it long.* 153
- Avarice, *a Counterpoise to Merit.* 287
- Authors apt to grow *Vain-glorious.* 91
And despise all Censure, ibid. *They should*
not value themselves for being read by
Fools, 146. *Their Conceitedness is surpris-*
ing,

INDEX.

sing, 170. They never cease to admire their own Writings. 178

B.

B eauty, its Charms often dissipated by idle Discourse.	55
Benefactions to be made in last Wills, are very insignificant.	198
Benefits, how to grant 'em.	139, 140
Borrowing (Money) censured.	205

C.

C alumny, what Temper it argues.	143
Caprice, why Men live so much by it,	211.
Represented at large.	244, &c.
Censor's Part hard to act.	22
Censures, how to be received.	171
Censure, oftentimes indiscreet.	39
Censurers (the greatest) not affected with their own Faults.	133
Ceraustus affects Greatness.	183
Ceremonies exploded.	263
Ceremonies, Tradesmen, Country-Folks, and Pedants, most full of 'em.	275
Character forced, ridiculous.	234
Cits (Prodigal) how ruin'd.	160
Civilities, excessive, are troublesome.	275
Company, Choice of it ought to be our chief Study.	260
Complaisance, how far it ought to go, 30. 'Tis the surest Way to the Friendship of Men,	271
Com-	

INDEX.

- Comprehension, *some admire most what's above
their Comprehension.* 104
- Concealing *Wit*, sometimes great *Wit.* 47
- Conceited *Fool-hardiness*, to be rectified. 168
- Condescension in proportioning one's self to the
Humour and Character of those we converse
with, 282. *A Sign of a sublime Genius*, 14.
Its great Defect in Men of Learning. 148,
150
- Confidents, *their Character.* 44
- Conversation, the generality of it insipid, 10.
Monopoly in it a Tyranny over Wit, 14, 40.
*The Pleasure of it ruin'd by the whimsical
Unevenness of some People*, 246. *Conver-
sation with disreputable Persons censured*, 249.
Why the Conversation of Women is insipid,
250. *And incommodious*, 261. *Why com-
mon Conversation is so nauseous.* 266
- Coquetry, *familiar Letters a great Fund of it.*
38
- Counsel to be cautiously given. 50, 51
- Country Squires listen with a silly Attention.
9
- Courage, *how to season it*, 55, 56. *The Vanity
of rash Courage.* 85
- Covetousness the most unpardonable Madness,
192. *Scarce consistent with Honesty*, 203.
It renders Men unfit for Society or Secrecy.
205
- Credulity the natural Consequence of Self-suffi-
ciency. 220
- Character, *Theocrino's.* 28
- Criticism inexorable has ill Effects. 249
- Cunning,

INDEX.

Cunning, *most People's Commerce runs upon it.* 74

D.

Dead, *'tis cowardly to speak ill of them.* 143

Decorums, *the Soul of Society, 270. Their Source and several Branches.* ib.

Delicacy, *(false) the Effect of ill Humour or ill Breeding, 259. Its several Steps.* ib.

Dependance, *the Punishment of it.* 223

Devotees, *Affectation in them censured.* 69, 70

Discourse, *Formality in it and Starchness censured.* 66, 71

Discretion of Men *not to be depended upon.* 241

Disgrace, *not to be insulted.* 195

Disimulation *exposed.* 108

Drollery, *when it disgusts.* 22, 30

E.

Eclesiasticks in France *scandalously prodigal.* 280.

Equipage of Ecclesiasticks *ought to be regulated by the Government.* ib.

Esteem, *oftentimes owing to Fate or Fortune, 4. 'Tis lessen'd, and sometimes quite lost, by too frequent Conversation.* ib.

Event, *The Injustice of judging of Things by the Event.* 186

Excel-

INDEX.

- Excellencies without Modesty are displeasing to others. 84
 Expences, Indiscretion in them, 56, 57, 172
 Experience makes us more acceptable to the World than Precepts. 274
 Extravagancies ought to be without Witnesses. 228

F.

- F**Acetiousness. See Gaiety.
 Family, the best way to govern it. 136
 Familiarity with Women of Merit and Beauty dangerous, 12. Familiarity at the first Visit censured, 54, 241. Familiarity with Persons of a high Rank censured, 54, 289. Excess of it suits with none. 273
 Faults inseparable from human Nature, 3. We should sometimes dissemble the seeing them, 24. Cautions relating to the Faults of others, 33, 51. Vain Men never own a Fault, 80. Why People correct themselves of any Fault, 87. We must not pretend to correct all that have committed Faults, 125, 132. The Vanity of observing the Faults of others, 221, 264
 Favorinus his Character. 33
 Favourites rarely approved. 144
 Feasts, how to be managed. 21
 Fickleness expos'd. 246, 254
 Finical Affectation. 73
 Flattery, a Vice mightily in Vogue, 96. How to distinguish it from sincere Praise, 179, 181. 'Tis scandalous. 182
 Fools

I N D E X.

Fools <i>persist always in their Error.</i>	80
Foppery <i>increases with Age.</i>	90
Formalists <i>expos'd.</i>	141, 263
Fortune, <i>Change of it begets a Change of Manners and Opinions, 165 155. Why Men of Integrity seldom get any great Fortune.</i>	204
Friendship <i>shewn will not oblige People if we talk much of it, 17. True Friendship requires Courage, 193. 'Tis banished the World by Interest.</i>	194

G.

G aiety <i>overdone grows insipid, 104. It should always be moderate.</i>	161
Gamesters <i>can hardly be worthy Men.</i>	200
Gaming <i>corrupts the best Principles, 204. Neither Experience nor Misfortunes will cure it.</i>	210
Generosity <i>stifled by Interest.</i>	202
Gerion's <i>Character of the Hero of France expos'd.</i>	130
Gratitude <i>ought to be free and easy.</i>	196
Greatness <i>affected by Inferiors is exposing.</i>	72, 121
Great Men's <i>Caprices command the Multitude,</i>	173

Hair-

INDEX.

H.

- H** Airbrain'd Behaviour can never please. 159
- Head guilty of fewer Faults than the Heart. 244
- Haughty Strain best answer'd without Commotion, 18. Haughty People must submit to a thousand Mortifications. 219
- High Birth no Foundation of Pride. 224
- High Living does not make a Man valuable. 122
- Hochstet Battel. 177
- Homebred People very fond of their personal Merit. 81
- Husband miserly to a young Wife, hazards both her Honour and his own. 238
- Hypocrisy expos'd. 111
- Housewifery despised by Women of great Figure. 172

I.

- I**dleness of Women the first Source of their Disorders. 292
- Jealousy in Husbands caution'd, 37. 'Tis oftentimes fatal to their Repose and Honour, 136.
- 'Tis a Source of a thousand Impertinencies, 248. Jealousies should be well conceal'd, 253.
- 'Tis the infallible Sign of an ill-turn'd Mind and a groveling Soul. 256
- Jests, Cautions about 'em, 41, 53. Some would rather

INDEX.

rather disoblige their best Friends than lose them.	100
Jester, his Character.	156
Ignorant People talk most.	149
Impatience to tell every thing we know, a certain Sign of Vanity.	273
Impatience when People are speaking discover'd in the Looks, a Vice.	11
Imperfections, natural, 'tis uncivil to mention them.	20
Impertinence arises from want of Attention, 145. Its Definition.	ib.
Impertinents, several Species of them.	150, 155
Impostures, their Effects.	107
Incompliantness of Humour represented.	232
Indifference to Things surprizing, censured.	222
Indiscretion the Effect of Unpoliteness, 29. Indiscretion defined, 31. 'Tis hard to be cured.	33
Ingratitude natural to some, the Effect of a secret Pride.	85
Insignificancy in the World represented.	217
Insulting a Man guilty of a Folly, and expressing a malicious Joy at his Confusion, is extremely rude and cruel.	15, 126
Interruption in Conversation an unpardonable Incivility.	11, 240, 250
Interest, its various Effects.	189

Laugh-

I N D E X.

L.

- L** Aughing at others Follies censured. 42
 Law-Suits hereditary, 196. They warp
 the Mind most, and soonest corrupt Integrity. 200
 Learned Men, why unacceptable to Men of
 Breeding, 26, 148. They have a lofty Idea
 of their own Sufficiency. 77
 Learning pompously display'd, a Sign of foolish
 Vanity. ib.
 Liberality misplaced does a Man no Credit. 289
 Living (*Art of*) the most useful of all Sciences,
 2. Learn'd sometimes by ill Fortune. 223

M.

- M** Aggotry expos'd. 246
 Marriage, the Inconveniencies of it, 135.
 Especially of matching Youth with old Age. 285, 286, 287
 Masters indiscreet in talking before their Ser-
 vants. 49
 Matrimony, the Hopes of it make Women take
 too great a Liberty. 40
 Meanness of Birth not to be conceal'd, 71.
 People of mean Extraction apt to be vain
 in pretending Antiquity, 82. And that ve-
 ry insolently, 122. They expose themselves
 to Ridicule in affecting to equal and con-
 verse with the Courtiers, 163, 164, 165, 260.
 They

I N D E X.

- They have a great Opinion of their own personal Merit.* 183
- Melancholy, why Men fall into it without knowing the Reason.* 211
- Men are ever disposed to judge ill of Women,* 180. *Why Men take so little Pleasure in one another.* 257
- Merit (great) is sometimes nothing but a great Artifice to hide Imperfections, 3. Merit no Defence against the Raillery of Buffoons, .99. Fondness of one's own Merit, leads to many Extravagancies, 218. It disquiets us when we see the Merit of others, ibid. Consciousness of Merit bears no Competitors.* 225
- Merlet (Countess of) her Character.* 56
- Misanthropy, represented.* 127
- Misfortunes, a great Mark of Weakness and Pride, to be always complaining of them, 237. Especially with a Gaiety, 233. The Cruelty of despising People under them, 290. A Pleasure taken in relating them.* 237, 267
- Mode, the Change of it consider'd.* 251
- Modesty should not be scrupulous, 61. Modesty affected, a Sign of foolish Vanity, 88. Modesty a Sign of Merit.* 144
- Monder's Character.* 157
- Morose Humour defined, 128. It shuts a Man's Eyes against his own Interest, 129. Its other Effects, ibid. 'Tis a Diversion to Spectators.* 139
- Mothers, their Complacency makes their Daughters proud, 224. And immoral.* 277
- Murfant, his Character.* 10
- Nar-

I N D E X.

N.

- N**arcissus *characteriz'd.* 46
Natural Relations most pleasing. 156
 Newsmonger, *his Character, 157. Importu-*
nity to tell News is Impertinence. 239
Nicety of Taste expos'd, 259, 263. Nicety
in point of Decorum. 271
 Nobility, *chimerical, is the Disease of those that*
grow rich. 165
 Novelty *gains upon the Judgment.* 104

O.

- O**bloquy, *best baffled by seeming not to hear*
it. 142
 Obscenity, *though ambiguous, is very imperti-*
nent. 159
 Obstinaey, *though in Vindication of the Truth,*
displeases. 13
 Old Men *are always lecturing Youth.* 133
They would be very usefal if less morose, 134
Love in them is very ridiculous, 286. The
Ridiculousness of Old Women courting all
Pleasures. 230, 284, 285
 Opinion of one's self, *not to be remov'd.* 174
Opinion of our own Merit hinders the Dis-
covery of fictitious Praises, 177, 178. And
makes us backward to praise others, 180. It
sets all the World against us, 216. To oppose
the Opinion of all the World is prodigioufly
fantastical, 245, 249. The Honour of rece-
ding from an Opinion. 257
 Opu-

I N D E X.

Opulence, without Sense, inspires Men with Pride.	79
Order, whimsical People Enemies to it.	248
Outside handsome, a Prejudice in Favour of the Speaker.	17
Outward Appearance not to be neglected.	26

P.

P arents indiscreet in not dissembling the Inequality of Affection towards Children,	48
Their Outrage is not a good way to bring Children to their Duty.	288
Passions, why we indulge them so much.	168
They are the Cause of Injustice.	190
Pedantry very rude, 27. Its Unseasonableness, ib. It proceeds not from Science, but the ill Use of Science.	253
Plays, or Gaming, not to be quite interdicted, 134. But moderated.	135
Pleasing, the desire of it is natural, 4. How to please in Conversation.	278
Pleasure (malicious) in the Shame and Uneasiness of others.	132
Pleasure, the best way to please is to be civil and no great Pretender, 174. Why so few are perfect in the Art of pleasing.	281
Politeness, a Combination of Virtues, 7. Politeness defin'd.	28
Politicians, (Pretended) their foolish Sufficiency in pretending to foresee all Events.	227
Poverty	

I N D E X.

- Poverty join'd to a high Spirit a Misfortune. 197
- Praises equivocal are but ingenious Satires. 179
- To Praise Friends, is a nice Task. 237
- Praises, how to be receiv'd, 61, 63, 64. The Character of a perpetual Praiser. 127, 238
- Praises misplaced nauseous, 30. To praise a Man for Qualities that he has not, is to affront him, 88. And yet it takes. 177
- Praises given to others, in Expectation of the like from them. 89
- Prejudice divided and defined, 166. Its Effects. 167, &c.
- Prepossession of eminent Qualities, a great Source of Impertinence, 81. And of Uneasiness. 141
- Presumption, a Companion of Ignorance and Self-conceit, 185. It makes a Man negligent and lazy. 186
- Pride (*secret*) natural to all Men, 17. Where 'tis becoming, and where not, 146. 'Tis a kind of Drunkenness and Madness that ruins young Women. 167
- Prodigality censur'd. 160, 172
- Profession (*Persons of the same*) always jealous, 151. The Whimsy of despising one another. 255
- Promises to be cautiously granted, 34. There's a foolish Vanity in promising every one, 35. False Promises expos'd. 109, 112
- Prudence uncommon required in a Gentleman of the Sword. 55
- Publick

INDEX.

Publick, an inexorable Judge that ought to be
more cultivated than it is. 283

Q.

Quality (Persons of) are of late too familiar
with one another, 154. They have no
Authority for Nonsense, 157. Vices more
unpardonable in them than in others. 162

Quality (Persons of) young Women vainly affect
to be married to 'em, 83. Quality prefer'd
before Merit and Virtue, a great Corruption
of Manners. 121

Questioners, a sort of insupportable People.
152

R.

Raillery, how to season it, 21, 51, 52, 124.
This must be bore with sometimes. 153

Reformers are a needless Office. 145

Religion, the Odiousness of playing the Wit at
the Expence of Religion. 279

Relish, some Impertinents relish nothing that's
said to 'em. 260

Reputation, Indifference about it, in Women, the
highest Impudence, 39. To think to establish
their Reputation by condemning others, is in
vain, 65. Reputation not founded on Virtue
is not durable. 116

Reserve, Medium between a scrupulous Reserve
and Openness. 102

Reserved, Women were formerly more re-
serv'd

INDEX.

<i>serv'd than the Men, but now 'tis otherwise.</i>	98
Retirement gives an Air of Dignity.	4
Retreat ought to begin where Agreements end.	231
Revenge, an infamous Method of it.	272
Riches once got, never examin'd how they came, 212. They cover all Faults.	213
Ridicule in general, 1. We may fall into it by those very Things in which we excel, 84. Ri- diculous Customs seldom parted with, because not perceived.	90
Rivalling a Superior, dangerous.	47
Rudeness creates a general Aversion, and speaks a bad Education.	7

S.

S candal slighted by those who are not able to avoid it.	120
Scholars apt to be foolish and ridiculous,	148
Secrets not to be imparted to Women.	43
Secresy enjoin'd, spurs some to Discovery, 86. He that does not keep his Friend's Secret, can't be an honest Man.	272
Sedateness (apparent) not inconsistent with inward Disquiet.	252
Self, to talk of one's self and his own Affairs, nauseous, 41, 43, 44, 92, 233. Self-con- ceit in Men of Learning, the Source of their Unpoliteness, 26. We ought to study ourselves, 46. To talk much to one's own Dis-	

INDEX.

<i>Disadvantage, is a criminal Affectation.</i>	64,
	65
Self-conceit, <i>See</i> Vanity, and 141. <i>It hinders</i>	
<i>Repose.</i>	ib.
Self-love hinders our bad Qualities to make any	
<i>Impression upon us, 87. Its Effects.</i>	165,
	190
Self-praise expos'd.	89, 90, 93
Services (great) do not always procure Love.	
	288
Shinens censur'd.	66, 152
Silence, there's a way to be silent without the	
<i>Imputation of Stupidity.</i>	49
Sincerity, to Excess, dangerous, 19. Sinc-	
<i>erity, tho' blunt, preferable to fruitless Caref-</i>	
<i>ses, 35. Cautions about Sincerity, 43. 'Tis</i>	
<i>the Soul of Civil Society, 109. Every one</i>	
<i>boasts of it.</i>	112
Singularity ridiculous, 73. Some affect humour-	
<i>some Singularities, 101. They are always</i>	
<i>offensive.</i>	251
Stateliness in Women, when criminal.	66
Stinginess expos'd.	201, 202
Story, the Difficulty of telling a Story well, 86,	
239. To be always telling Stories is superfi-	
<i>cial Wit, 140. A merry Story should be</i>	
<i>gravely told.</i>	161
Subtilizing too much no Sign of good Wit.	269
Sufficiency, its Source and its Effects.	213
Suspicious Men hard to be convers'd with.	266

INDEX.

T.

Table, *how to behave at Table*, 21. *To commend all the Meats at Table is insipid.*

155

Talkers (*great*) *can't please long*, 41. *The Itch of Talking exposes the Weakness of Men*, 86. *The Talkativeness of Women proceeds from their want of Understanding*, 97. *Ignorant People talk most*, 233. *The ill Consequence of talking too freely of one another.*

278

Taste (*bad*) *defined*, 94. *It appears most in our Deference for Varlets raised by their Wits.*

106

Temper of *People to be studied.*

246

Thee and **T**hou, *the Use of it very finical.*

273

Time, *Actions mis-tim'd lose their Value.*

230

Tradesmen *passing for Persons of Quality*, 162.

Their Wives expose themselves to Ridicule.

164

Treachery *censured*, 113. *To be guarded against.*

123

Trouble (*present*) *requires speedy Succours more than moral Advices.*

229

V.

Vanity (*foolish*) *defined*, 74. *The Reason of it*, 75. *It seldom procures Love*, 78. *The Extravagancies it leads to.*

219

Virtue

INDEX.

- Virtue ought not to be morose, 61. Nor affected, 62. Virtues create Enemies, 142. The greatest Virtue is to conceal our Infirmities. 280
- Vice, all Men have a favourite Vice. 161
- Visions haunt credulous Persons. 188
- Visits, Observations upon 'em. 151, 169, 234, 241, 242, 243
- Uneasiness within makes others uneasy, 256. To be uneasy at what others say of us, a Source of perpetual Disquiet. 261
- Uneasiness in Company soon perceiv'd. 45
- Unpoliteness, what it is, 6. 'Tis that, of all Vices, which makes a Man most despicable, ibid. 'Tis the Cause of the Insipidness of young People's Discourses, 11. Why People bred in Colleges are unpolite. 26

W.

- W**ealth, its Effects. 183
- Whims of some People not to be remedied. 257
- Whispering in Company uncivil. 20
- Will, the Dotage of it not so easily cured as that of the Understanding. 290
- Wit starch'd and affected, expos'd. 247
- Wit (bold) dishonourable in Matters of Religion. 171
- Wit sometimes exposes a Man, 2. The Desire of being thought witty makes many ridiculous, 88, 101, 160. Every one's a Wit in this Age. 221, 263
- Wives,

I N D E X.

Wives, their Politicks incomprehensible. 135,
138

Women, to say soft Things to them all, is insipid, 8. *They ought not to be surpriz'd,* 37. *They should not be too forward in surrendering,* 38. *'Tis the highest Imprudence in them not to be concern'd about their Reputation,* 39. *Women not to be trusted with an important Secret,* 43. *Not to be rallied upon,* 51. *To boast of Favours from Women is ridiculous,* 53. *Generality of Women wantons,* 63. *Young Women made ridiculous and miserable, by marrying Persons of Quality,* 83. *Women are fond of divulging their Adventures,* 98. *We ought to be very reserv'd in passing Sentence on the Virtue of Women,* 115. *Interest is their governing Passion,* 158. *Themselves are the Cause of the little Respect paid them,* 208, 291. *The License, Immodesty, &c. of Women expos'd,* 208, 209. *Women impatient of being rival'd in any thing,* 225, 265. *The Maggottry of some Women who delight in Disorder,* 246. *The modern Liberty of young Women,* 276, 279. *'Tis natural for Women to desire to please,* 291. *Several Observations upon their Conduct.* 292, &c.

World, the best School to form the Mind, 4. *That School the speediest Remedy against Unpoliteness.* 28

Words

INDEX.

Words accidentally dropp'd the Cause of Mis-
chief, 52, 278. Most People have a favou-
rite Word. 175

Y.

YOUNG People unpolite, 12. Indiscreet in
talking too much, 49. See Please. They
are apt to think themselves capable of great
Things. 174

FINIS.



BOOKS printed for D. Midwinter, W. Innys
and R. Manby, A. Ward, T. Longman,
and C. Bathurst.

Dictionnaire Oeconomique, or the *Family Dictio-*
nary, in 2 Vols. *Fol.* Revised and recom-
mended by Mr. R. Bradley.

Justin's History of the World, &c. made
English by Mr. *Tho. Brown*, 12mo.

Lucius Florus's Epitome of the *Roman Hi-*
story, from *Romulus* to *Augustus Cæsar*, with
all *Grevius's* fine Cuts, 12mo.

Suetonius done into *English*, with *Petiscus's*
fine Cuts and Notes, in 2 Vols. 12mo.

Sallust the Historian, translated into *English*
by *John Rowe, Esq;* 12mo.

Miscellanies by the most noble *George, Lord*
Saville, late Marquis and Earl of *Halifax*,
viz. Advice to a Daughter, Character of a
Trimmer, Anatomy of an Equivalent, Let-
ter to a Dissenter, Cautions for Choice of Par-
liament-Men, a rough Draught of a new Mo-
del at Sea, Maxims of State. The third Edit.

The Advice to a Daughter is to be had single.

Three Plays by the Right Honourable *George*
Lord Lansdown, *viz.* Heroick Love, She Gal-
lants, Jew of *Venice*.

Hudibras, in three Parts, by *Sam. Butler Esq;*

Arithmetick made easy, by Mr. *Hill*, 8vo.

Littleton's Dictionary, 4to.

Cole's Latin Dictionary, 8vo.

Books in usum Delphini.

<i>Horace.</i>	<i>Ovid. Metam.</i>	<i>Lucius Florus.</i>
<i>Virgil.</i>	<i>— Epistolæ.</i>	<i>Sallust.</i>
<i>Cæsar.</i>	<i>Terence.</i>	<i>Phædri Fabulæ.</i>
<i>Juvenal.</i>	<i>Justin.</i>	<i>Nepos.</i>
<i>Tully's Orat.</i>		



